THE HALEYS & BURNETTS

Biographical sketches following three generations of the Haley / Burnett family tree, whose branches reached across nineteenth- and early twentieth-century North America

Herbert H. Haley · 1918–1970
Margaret Ellen Burnett · 1918–1997

Benjamin Thomas "B.T." Haley · 1876–1931
Maria Catherine "Kate" Whicker · 1874–1928
Melbourne Leroy Burnett · 1885–1937
Daisy May Propst · 1897–1997

Benjamin Franklin Haley · 1834–1895
Harriet "Hattie" Catherine Birdwell · 1848–1921
George Washington Whicker · 1843–1908
Emma Catherine Fleenor · 1848–1912
Samuel Melbourne Burnett · 1858–1917
Margaret Jane Brown · 1863–1942
Henry Taylor Propst · 1849–1929
Ellen Robb Nickerson · 1855–1943

Edward Evans Parrish · 1791–1874
Francis Marion McCoy · 1838–1916
Hugh Nickerson · 1818–1896
Howard Lawrence Propst · 1872–1962

Compiled from contemporary newspaper coverage, vital records, and family oral history

Michael P. Briggs · 2026

THE HALEYS & BURNETTS

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Compiled from contemporary newspaper coverage, vital records, and family oral history. Every effort has been made to verify names, dates, and places against original sources; corrections and additional documentation are welcomed for future editions.

ABOUT THIS COLLECTION

Attached are biographical sketches of eighteen individuals across three generations of the Haley / Burnett family tree, with roots in the Burnett, Propst, Haley, Whicker, and Nickerson lines. Their lives trace the major westward migrations of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century North America: Oregon Trail crossings, post-Civil War Virginia, the Oklahoma land openings, the Peace River homesteading frontier of Alberta, and the settled railway and agricultural communities of the Pacific Northwest.

The material is drawn primarily from contemporary newspaper articles. Small-town papers across Virginia, Oklahoma, Oregon, Alberta, and New Brunswick recorded social visits, lodge elections, illnesses, births, marriages, and obituaries in a level of detail no other source matches. These are supplemented by genealogical and vital records — death and marriage certificates, census returns, homestead patents, immigration filings, and draft registration cards — with FamilySearch a useful supplementary platform. Oral history and family artifacts fill in further detail where they survive.

The biographies are not complete. Gaps remain in early childhoods, in years without newspaper coverage, and in unresolved questions such as the limited documentation of Benjamin Franklin Haley's life, the outcome of G. W. Whicker's 1897 legal proceedings, and the reason Henry Taylor Propst used different initials during his years in Canada.

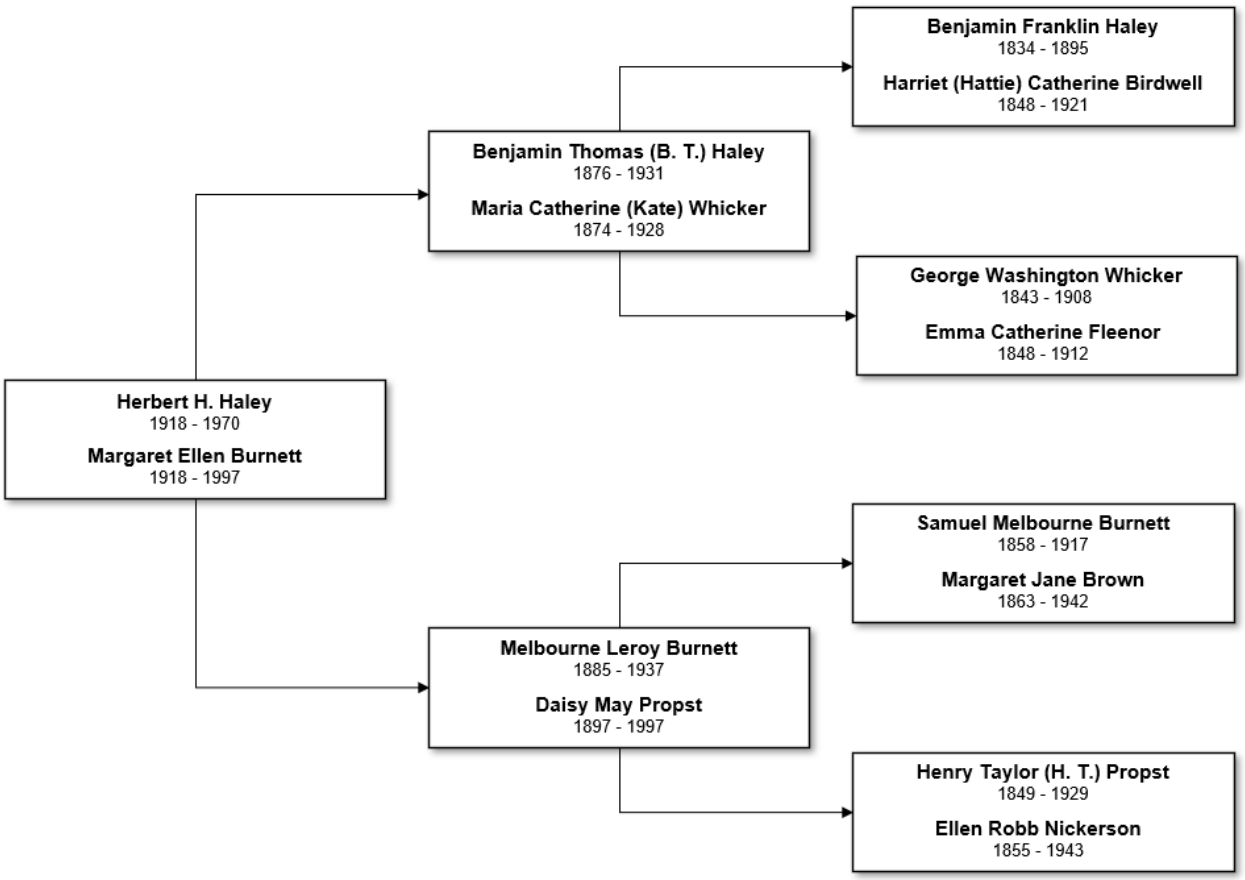
Several individuals beyond the principal subjects are also included:

- **Edward Evans Parrish** crossed the plains from Ohio to Oregon in 1847. His story is preserved in the journal he kept on the trail.
- **Hugh Nickerson** crossed the plains from Ohio to Oregon in 1851 with his family and five yoke of cattle.
- **Francis Marion McCoy,** a Civil War veteran of the Union army, married Harriett "Hattie" Birdwell in 1898 after the death of her first husband, Benjamin Franklin Haley. They remained married for eighteen years, until McCoy's death in 1916. He led an eventful life in his own right.
- **Howard Lawrence Propst** worked closely with his father, Henry Taylor Propst, through their family's long migration arc: Oregon to Saskatchewan, back to Oregon and Washington, north to Alberta, and finally home to the Pacific Northwest.

The documents are intended as biographical summaries — enough to know each person as an individual — rather than exhaustive genealogies.

HALEY / BURNETT FAMILY TREE

Three generations descending from Herbert H. Haley and Margaret Ellen Burnett



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WORKING METHODS

A note on sources, evidence, and editorial conventions used throughout this book

SOURCES USED

These biographies draw on three broad categories of material, weighted in the order given below when evidence conflicts.

- **Newspaper coverage.** The primary source for most of the narrative detail in this book. Small-town papers across Virginia, Oklahoma, Oregon, Alberta, Ohio, and New Brunswick routinely recorded social visits, lodge elections, illnesses, births, marriages, and obituaries in a level of detail no other source matches. Where a paper is quoted or closely paraphrased, its name and date are given in the text or in the Sources list at the end of each chapter.
- **Vital, legal, and government records.** Birth, marriage, and death certificates; census returns; homestead patents; immigration and naturalization filings; Social Security applications; Selective Service registration cards; military and Civilian Conservation Corps service records; probate and estate filings; crew manifests. FamilySearch served as a useful supplementary platform for locating and cross-referencing many of these records.
- **Oral history and family papers.** Interviews recorded with surviving family members, family letters, photographs, and personal narratives compiled from those interviews. These sources supply texture, motive, and private detail unavailable anywhere else — but see the note on reliability below.

HOW CONFLICTING EVIDENCE IS HANDLED

Documentary evidence — vital records, contemporary newspaper reporting, government filings — is treated as authoritative for dates, places, names, and sequences of events. Oral history is treated as reliable for texture, motive, and detail, but subordinate to documentary evidence whenever the two disagree on a specific fact.

Where a discrepancy could not be resolved — a conflicting date, an unverified claim, an account that runs against the paper trail — the biography notes the conflict directly rather than silently choosing one version.

> *The aim throughout is not to manufacture certainty where none exists, but to show the reader exactly how confident each claim is and why — so that a fact drawn from a signed government document and a fact recalled sixty years later in an oral history interview are never presented with the same weight.*

EDITORIAL CONVENTIONS

- **Vital Statistics table.** Each biography opens with a table of the core genealogical facts — birth, death, burial, parents, marriage, children, and siblings — pulled directly from the vital record where one exists.
- **Indented italic passages.** Text set off in an indented block with a rule at the left margin is editorial or contextual commentary. It is clearly distinguished from the narrative voice and from directly quoted material.
- **Direct quotations.** Letters, interview transcripts, and other verbatim material are quoted directly and attributed to their source at the point of use.
- **"Also known as" line.** Name variants encountered across records — nicknames, alternate spellings, married names — are listed beneath each subject's title so readers can recognize the same person under a different name in another source.
- **Sources list.** Each biography closes with a categorized list of the specific records and publications consulted, organized as Vital and Legal Records, Newspaper Sources, and Family and Genealogical Sources, so that any claim in the text can be traced back to its origin.

ACKNOWLEDGED GAPS

These biographies are not, and do not claim to be, complete. Gaps remain in early childhoods, in years without newspaper coverage, and in a small number of specific unresolved questions noted at the relevant point in the text — among them the limited documentation of Benjamin Franklin Haley's life, the outcome of G. W. Whicker's 1897 legal proceedings, and the reason Henry Taylor Propst used different initials during his years in Canada. Where the record is silent, this book stays silent rather than speculating.

The intent throughout is to provide a biographical account of each person — enough to know them as an individual — rather than an exhaustive genealogy.

HERBERT H. HALEY

Amateur Radio Pioneer • Radio Broadcaster • News Announcer • Sales Engineer

OREGON • CALIFORNIA • OHIO

Also known as: Herb Haley • Herbert Haley

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	March 28, 1918, Freewater, Umatilla County, Oregon
DIED	November 28, 1970, Los Angeles, California (age 52)
BURIAL	Forest Lawn Memorial Park (Hollywood Hills), then moved to IOOF Cemetery, The Dalles, Oregon
FATHER	Benjamin Thomas Haley (1876–1931)
MOTHER	Maria Catherine (Kate) Whicker (1875–1928)
MARRIED	May 10, 1941, Vancouver, Clark County, Washington, to Margaret Ellen Burnett (1918–1997)
CHILDREN	Mardi Lynn Haley (1942–) Randi Haley (1944–) Melissa Leah Haley (1950–2019)
SIBLINGS	Mary Alberta Haley (1897 – 1952) Benjamin Thomas Jr. Haley (1902 – 1971) Theodore "Ted" Roosevelt Haley (1907 – 1974) Naomi Kathleen Haley (1909 – 1984) Ruth Azalea Haley (1911 – 1965) Billie Estelle Haley (1915 – 1995)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Herbert H. Haley was born on March 28, 1918, at Freewater, Umatilla County, Oregon, the youngest of seven children of Benjamin Thomas (B. T.) Haley and Maria Catherine (Kate) Whicker. The Freewater birthplace, confirmed by his Social Security application of August 1937, his Civilian Conservation Corps records of 1936, and his California death certificate, places him as the first child of the family born in Oregon — his older siblings having been born during the Olustee, Oklahoma, years that ended with his parents' permanent move to

the Walla Walla Valley in 1917. He arrived as the family was setting down roots on Cherry Grove farm, the ten-acre fruit tract two miles north of Freewater that his father would build into a successful apple-and-cherry operation.

He grew up the youngest of a tight-knit family. His older siblings, by the time he reached school age, included Mary Alberta, Benjamin Thomas Jr., Theodore Roosevelt (Ted), Naomi Kathleen, Ruth Azalea, and Billie Estelle. The 1927 East End Apple Show records show Herbert, then about nine, exhibiting Black Giant poultry alongside his sister Ruth, who took first place for both her wool dress and her cotton dress in the Girls Under 15 category.

> *The Walla Walla Valley fruit district in the 1920s was a closely-knit agricultural community in which the county apple show was a major annual event. Children of fruit ranchers participated alongside their parents — raising chickens, sewing dresses, exhibiting in 4-H — and the East Oregonian reported the results in detail. The 1927 show notice gives a small but clear glimpse of the world Herbert was born into: a world of poultry, sewing, fruit grading, and ribbon prizes, with the whole family in the running.*

That world ended in stages. His mother Kate died in 1928, when Herbert was ten — leaving him half-orphaned, with his father marrying Mrs. Myrtle Foltz of Milton in 1929. His father's health then began a long decline through chronic illness, and B. T. Haley died on November 13, 1931, when Herbert was thirteen. The Spokesman-Review obituary of November 17, 1931, listed Herbert among the seven surviving children, noting him as one of three children (alongside Ted and Billie) still living at the family home in Freewater. He was now fully orphaned — a thirteen-year-old whose father had been one of the district's most prominent fruit ranchers and whose mother's family connections ran back to the Olustee Whickers — and the question of who would manage his care, and the family land, was now an open one.

THE ESTATE PROCEEDINGS (1933)

In August 1933, the East Oregonian carried two related notices on the same page. The county court had appointed A. C. McIntyre as guardian ad litem for Herbert H. Haley, minor son of B. T. Haley, deceased, in proceedings to sell real property belonging to the estate. The same court had authorized C. F. Collins, administrator of the estate, to sell a descriptive tract of land in section 35, township 6 north range 35 EWM — part of the Cherry Grove farm. The administrator had filed an additional undertaking of $3,500 for the sale.

The double notice tells a quiet story: Herbert, by then fifteen and the only remaining minor child, needed a guardian appointed specifically so that the family land could be liquidated to settle the estate. Whatever remained of his father's apple-and-cherry operation was being wound down.

> *Fruit prices in the Pacific Northwest had collapsed by 1933, and the value of the property was far less than the property would have been worth a few years earlier. The Cherry Grove farm that B. T. Haley had built up over a decade was taken over by Herb's sister, Mary, and her husband, E. L. Jamison. Herb lived with them until he was eighteen.*

MCLOUGHLIN UNION HIGH SCHOOL AND THE PIONEER RADIO CLUB (1932–1935)

Herbert appears to have found his footing at McLoughlin Union High School (Mac-Hi) in Milton-Freewater, where the social and intellectual life of his teenage years took shape around two enthusiasms that would define his entire adult career: radio and performance. He was an active Boy Scout in the early 1930s, mentioned in a January 1932 East Oregonian County news item, and by 1936 had been invested as a Rover Scout at a regional ceremony in Walla Walla — the senior tier of scouting, reserved for older youth, and presided over by Dr. E. D. Partridge, the national research director of the organization.

But it was the Mac-Hi Pioneer Radio Club, founded in 1934, that would point Herbert toward his life's work. By January 1935 the club had set up code-practicing sets to teach members the international code, and had applied for its amateur government license. The license came through a few weeks later. The February 2, 1935, East Oregonian carried the full slate: Herbert Haley, licensed amateur, was the trustee of the station and the club's president; Paul Walden was vice president and secretary; Sidney Reese was custodian; Frank McKinney, treasurer; Howard Morrison, librarian; Jay Bixby, sergeant of arms.

By February 8th the paper was reporting that the club was busy erecting antennae for a short-wave transmitting station, the equipment arriving that week. Once it was on the air, the article noted, it would be the only radio-equipped high school in the state of Oregon. Some schools had receivers, but they did not have transmitters. Herbert Haley was president of the club, the article added, and he had a station of his own. A week later the club was installing a transmitter and receiver in the physics department, with a loud-speaker system going into the high school so that every room in the building could hear educational programs.

> *Amateur radio in the 1930s was at the cutting edge of communications technology, attracting the same kind of bright, hands-on, technically-minded teenagers who would later be drawn to computers in the 1970s and 1980s. To be a licensed amateur as a high school student, with one's own station, was a real accomplishment — it required passing FCC examinations on theory, regulations, and Morse code. The Pioneer Radio Club's transmitter put Mac-Hi on the air as the only broadcasting high school in Oregon, and Herbert was at the center of that achievement.*

His Mac-Hi years were not all radio. The March 19, 1935, East Oregonian announced that the combined boys' and girls' glee clubs would present the operetta "Ship Ahoy" — a chorus of sixty-six voices, with speaking parts and solos given by Marjorie Kinnear, Herbert Haley, and several others. He graduated with the class of 1935 on May 15th, in a class of forty-one girls and thirty boys. His Mac-Hi diploma, recorded a year later in his CCC enrollment papers, was in the Scientific course — the academic track that included the physics and electrical theory underlying his radio work. His name appears in the published roll alongside the same Mac-Hi names that turn up in the Pioneer Radio Club roster: Paul Walden, Reese Lamb, Sidney Reese, Howard Morrison.

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS: VANCOUVER BARRACKS (1936–1937)

In early 1936 the family farm was sold in bankruptcy. The Pacific Northwest was deep in the Depression, the family farm was gone, and a seventeen-year-old high-school graduate with no capital and no parents had limited options. On April 7, 1936 just days after his 18th birthday, he applied for enrollment in the Civilian Conservation Corps through the Umatilla County Relief office in Pendleton. The application records his last job as warehouse truck driving, his best qualification as farm work, his outdoor work experience as having been continuous since he was old enough to be employed. The form also asked what kind of job he hoped to find after his CCC enrollment was complete. He wrote three words: "Interested in Radio."

> *The CCC application is the earliest surviving statement in Herbert's own hand of the career he intended to pursue. He was eighteen years old, just under a year out of his Mac-Hi graduation, and the Pioneer Radio Club years were still fresh. The decision to register "Interested in Radio" as his post-CCC vocational goal in April 1936 means that the trajectory from KUJ in Walla Walls in 1939 to KGO San Francisco by 1942 was not a happy accident but the realization of a career plan that he had committed to in writing as a teenager.*

He was accepted, and was sworn into the Corps on April 9, 1936, at Vancouver Barracks, Washington — the historic Army post on the Columbia River, just across from Portland, that served as a major mustering point for CCC enrollees from the Pacific Northwest. His enrollment papers describe him as 5' 9 ½", weighing 153 pounds, with blue eyes, brown hair, and a ruddy complexion. Vision and hearing were 20/20 across the board; the only physical finding of any note was "pes planus first degree, bilateral" — mild flat feet.

Herbert was assigned to Company DHD (the District Headquarters Detachment) at Vancouver Barracks itself, working as a Clerk in the Quartermaster Corps from April 9, 1936 through July 5, 1937. His duties were administrative rather than the pick-and-shovel forestry and trail work that the CCC was known for; the DHD detachment ran the supply, payroll, and personnel functions for the entire Vancouver Barracks district. His class rating in the educational program suggested coursework in Home Mechanics, Records, Radio, and Dramatics — the formal acknowledgment of interests that he had brought into the Corps with him. He completed five months at the National Engineering School during his service.

A significant detail: his $25-per-month CCC pay allotment — the standard arrangement under which most of an enrollee's $30 monthly wage was sent home to dependents — was assigned not to a parent (he had none) but to his sister Miss Billie Haley, c/o E. L. Jamison, Freewater, Oregon. Billie, four years older than Herbert, was living with their older sister Mary (Mrs. E. L. Jamison) and her husband, and Herbert's CCC wages were her support.

> *The Jamison household at Freewater — Mary (Haley) Jamison, her husband E. L. Jamison, and the boarding sister Billie — was effectively the surviving Haley family unit in the years immediately after B. T. Haley's death and the breakup of Cherry Grove farm. Herbert's allotment of his CCC wages to that household, and his own use of it as his nearest relative's address through 1937. By 1939 the Jamisons had moved to Nyssa, Oregon*

His CCC service was steady. Three brief absences with permission — December 30, 1936 to January 3, 1937 (five days), March 25–30, 1937 (six days), and a third in June 1937 — are recorded as AWP (absent with permission) and accounted for under standard regulations. He was hospitalized at Vancouver Barracks from January 19 to January 24, 1937, for influenza, with complete recovery noted. His performance was rated "Satisfactory" throughout.

On July 5, 1937, after fifteen months in the Corps, Herbert was discharged honorably under the category of "Urgent Proper Calls" — the CCC's standard administrative term for releases

granted to enable an enrollee to take up employment opportunities outside the Corps. The address recorded for him at discharge was c/o E. L. Jamison, Nyssa, Oregon, his sister's family having moved east during his enrollment.

IOWA AND FIRST EMPLOYMENT (1937–1939)

Within a month of his CCC discharge, Herbert was halfway across the country. The August 4, 1937, Greene Recorder — in Greene, Iowa — reported that Mrs. Helen Scripture had entertained for several days her nephew Morse Painton and friend, Herbert Haley, of Portland, Oregon. The young men were touring the Midwest and were very favorably impressed with the state of Iowa. Three days later, on August 7, 1937, Herbert applied for his Social Security number from Waterloo, Iowa, where he had taken a job at the S. S. Kresge Dollar Store at 219 East 4th Street. He was nineteen years old, living at 412 East 11th Street. The application records his birth as March 28, 1918, at Freewater, Oregon; his father as Benjamin Thomas Haley; his mother as Catharine Mary Whicker.

> *He was released from Vancouver Barracks on July 5th, was in Iowa within a month, and had taken a clerk's job by early August. Whether the trip with Morse Painton was the precipitating opportunity — a friend's suggestion, a chance to see something of the country — or whether the Iowa job was the destination from the start, the Kresge store work was clearly a brief chapter rather than a planned career. His CCC application had said Radio. The Kresge job was just the work that was available in the meantime.*

By spring 1939 he was at Nyssa, near La Grande in eastern Oregon, where his older sister Mary (Mrs. E. L. Jamison) and family had relocated. The May 18, 1939, Nyssa Gate City Journal carried a brief social note: Herbert Haley had visited his sister Mrs. E. L. Jamison and family the previous week, leaving Saturday for La Grande. He was making his own way — and the long-stated plan to enter radio was about to begin to take concrete form.

In late June 1939, the La Grande Observer reported that Floyd Bryant and Herb Haley were planning a business trip to Portland the following day, returning Friday. The trip's purpose became clear two weeks later. The July 8th Observer ran a small notice headed "Two Get Licenses": Floyd Bryant and Herb Haley had been notified the previous day that they had both been granted first-class radio telephone operators' licenses, for which they had recently taken examinations in Portland.

> *The First-Class Radio Telephone Operator's license was the FCC's senior commercial license, required to operate the transmitter of a commercial broadcasting station. It was a real credential, qualitatively different from the amateur license Herbert had held since high school. With it, he was qualified to work as a chief engineer or transmitter operator at any broadcasting station in the country. Three years and three months after writing "Interested in Radio" on his CCC application, he had the license that would let him do it.*

By autumn 1939 he was briefly at KUJ in Walla Walla, Washington, then KLBM in La Grande, working as a radio personality. The November 25, 1939, Oregonian carried a charming letter to the editor's "Bonnie Baker & Rock" column over the signature "HERB HALEY, KLBM, La Grande." The letter was a young radio man's tour of his pet peeves and enthusiasms — nose-holding session needed for the likes of Gabby Heater and tearful Dave Elman, a question about the age of Wee Bonnie Baker, an opinion that Frankie Masters had "em all backed off the bandstand," and a final "Orchids to you and your column, Mike, it's one of the best things in radio." The letter is the first surviving instance of a written voice that would become familiar to readers of West Coast radio columns for the next decade.

KBKR BAKER AND BUILDING A RADIO CAREER (1939–1941)

By December 1939, Herbert had moved to Baker, Oregon, to help launch the brand-new KBKR — a 250-watt station on 1500 kc that opened December 3rd of that year. The Variety Radio Directory and the 1940 Radio Daily Annual both list him in the same roles: program director and one of the station's news commentators, alongside station manager Ellwood W. Lippincott. Chief engineer was R. R. (Robert B.) Sutton; commercial manager was Fred Pelger. KBKR was a small operation — base rate $12.50 per half hour, no foreign-language programming, no artists' bureau — but it was a real broadcasting station, and Herbert was running its programming at the age of twenty-one.

The Baker City Herald for March 20, 1940, recorded Herbert's initiation into the Baker Elks Lodge along with a large class of candidates. The Elks were the principal fraternal organization in small western towns of the period; joining was a marker of arrival as a settled member of the community.

On July 9, 1941, the Baker City Herald printed Selective Service Questionnaire 1799 in the name of Herbert H. Haley, The Dalles. His Selective Service registration card, signed in his own hand, gives the fullest physical and biographical record of him at this point in his life:

serial number 1799, residing at 2315 Second Street, Baker, Oregon; telephone 596; age 22; date of birth March 28, 1918, at Freewater, Oregon; U.S. citizen; employed by Elwood Lippincott at KBKR in the Weil Building, Baker. The person who would always know his address was listed as "Mr. Benjamin T. Haley, brother," at 332 W. 119th Street, Los Angeles, California — his older brother Benjamin Thomas Haley Jr.

> *The Selective Service card is the first document we have that establishes Herbert's connection to Los Angeles — through his brother Ben. The address at 2315 Second Street, Baker, was probably a boarding-house or apartment for the young KBKR program director; the salary at $12.50 per half-hour airtime would not have supported a house of his own.*

By January 1941, Herbert had moved on from KBKR to KODL, the new station in The Dalles, Oregon (1230 kc), which had gone on the air in October 1940. According to Margaret Haley's 1996 oral history, an engineer at KODL who had come from the Milton-Freewater area (most likely Paul Walden) kept telling Margaret, then the station's secretary and bookkeeper, that he was trying to recruit his friend Herb to join the station; by the time Herbert arrived that January, Margaret was already curious to meet him. They married four months later.

MARRIAGE TO MARGARET ELLEN BURNETT: MAY 10, 1941

On May 10, 1941, at Vancouver, Washington, in Clark County, Herbert Haley of Wasco County, Oregon, married Margaret Ellen Burnett, also of Wasco County. The Certificate of Marriage No. 8849 was filed May 13, 1941. The witnesses present at the ceremony were George J. Schatz (Margaret's brother-in-law) and C. H. Burnett (Margaret's brother).

Margaret Ellen Burnett was the elder daughter of Melbourne Leroy Burnett, the Union Pacific station agent at Biggs, Oregon — and of Daisy May Propst Burnett, the senior Union Pacific telegraph operator at The Dalles. Margaret had been born at Peace River, Alberta, on January 2, 1918, in the Irene Cottage Hospital, just eleven weeks before Herbert's own birth in Freewater, Oregon.

> *The choice of Vancouver, Washington for the ceremony — just across the Columbia from Portland, with a Presbyterian minister and a four-day-old marriage license from Skamania County — has the modest, practical character of a young couple's elopement, conducted with family present but without public fanfare. Vancouver itself was familiar territory to Herbert: it was where he had been sworn into the CCC at Vancouver Barracks in April 1936 and had served fifteen months as*

> *a Quartermaster clerk. Five years after his CCC enrollment, he was back in Vancouver to be married.*

Margaret's oral history recalled that she had been engaged to another man, a Dalles ice-cream-shop owner, when Herb arrived at KODL. Their courtship developed on the walk home from the station, which Herb extended by scenic routes past the local canal, until he told her "There isn't room on that hand for two rings." She broke off the earlier engagement, and the two were married within months.

KMED MEDFORD, KGO SAN FRANCISCO, AND THE WAR YEARS (1941–1945)

By early 1942, Herbert had moved south to Medford, taking a position with KMED. The January 15, 1942, Oregonian carried another of his letters to the column, this one signed "HERB HALEY, Radio KMED, Medford." It was a longer, sharper, more confident letter than the 1939 one — a four-class taxonomy of radio newscasters according to their pronunciation habits, ending with a salty observation that some of his colleagues, when they hit a hard word, "fake a cough after the first syllable, or muff it completely and blame the engineer." He was twenty-three years old and clearly enjoying himself.

The Medford Mail Tribune for March 3, 1942, carried a birth notice: a girl, six pounds, born February 24th at Community hospital to Mr. and Mrs. Herbert H. Haley of 716 East Main Street, Medford. The child was Mardi Lynn Haley, the first of three daughters.

In June 1942, Broadcasting Magazine recorded a major step up: Herbert Haley, announcer, formerly of KMED, Medford, Ore., had been added to the staff of KGO, San Francisco. KGO was the Blue Network's flagship station for the West Coast, and joining its staff put him in the front rank of West Coast radio talent.

The election of November 1942 gave him his first chance to demonstrate that he belonged there. The San Francisco Chronicle and KGO had organized a joint broadcast — the "Chronicle-KGO Voc-A-News" — which would carry election returns continuously from 5:30 p.m. on, with announcers stationed at the various polling and tally points across the city. The November 1st Chronicle named Herb Haley among the four announcers who would be doing the cut-in scenes. The November 3rd issue ran a longer feature on the rival candidates and the broadcast plan, again naming him among the KGO ace announcers.

The November 4th Chronicle carried the photograph: a tight cluster of newsroom and broadcast staff gathered around the KGO microphone in the managing editor's office. Major General Paul B. Malone is in the foreground; Herb Haley is identified in the photo caption as one of the announcers. He is in his middle twenties, slim, dark-haired, watching the action.

> *The 1942 Voc-A-News broadcast was a significant innovation in election-night radio, combining a major newspaper's reporting infrastructure with a major network station's broadcast capacity. Herb Haley's role — covering one of the cut-in scenes from the field — placed him among the senior announcing talent in the Bay Area. Major General Paul B. Malone, who appears in the same photograph, was at this point a senior figure in California military affairs and would soon be involved in Office of War Information work; the family note that Herbert later "worked with him on some of his OWI work" suggests this election-night broadcast was the start of a longer association.*

The November 1943 election was a similar story — "KGO Mirrors Election from Chronicle," the November 3rd Chronicle headlined, with Herb Haley picking up the broadcast midway through City Hall coverage.

The June 15, 1943, Chronicle reported a smaller and characteristic moment: Herb Haley and Bill Baldwin, KGO announcers, were self-appointed reminders of the significance of Flag Day, having discovered twenty-eight flagpoles devoid of flags in a small downtown area, and had used their studio program to ask for a fuller display of the national banner. It was the kind of small civic gesture that came naturally to him.

By January 1944 he had a regular Sunday spot. The January 16th Chronicle carried a quarter-page advertisement: "Today's Headlines! Listen to the 'SHASTA NEWS' as presented by Herb Haley today and every Sunday at 11:00 A.M. KGO 810 on your dial — The Blue Network Company." He had become a sponsored, named newscaster on a major-market network station.

Family life continued through the war years. The May 22, 1944, Broadcasting Magazine carried a one-line social note: "Herb Haley, announcer of KGO San Francisco, is the father of a girl." It was Randi Haley, Herb and Margaret's second daughter.

Margaret's oral history adds specific detail to the OWI connection noted above: Herbert served as an announcer for the Office of War Information's "Weekly War Journal" broadcasts

in 1943, wartime information programming that ran alongside his regular KGO newscasting duties.

U.S. MERCHANT MARINE: CHIEF RADIO OPERATOR (1945)

Margaret's oral history describes the lead-up to enlistment: Herbert had been repeatedly reclassified by the draft board — placed in Class 1-A, deferred, then reclassified again — until, as she recalled him saying, "one of these times they're not going to defer me, and then I'm going to be in the infantry, and I'm too slow for that." He enlisted in the Merchant Marine as a radio operator instead.

In March 1945, Broadcasting reported that Herb Haley, announcer of KGO San Francisco, had joined the U.S. Maritime Service. He was twenty-six years old, with two small children at home; the move was wartime service in the merchant fleet rather than direct combat, but it took him off the air for the better part of a year. The crew manifests of the War Shipping Administration record his service in detail.

The S.S. Flying Arrow arrived at San Francisco on June 1, 1945, from the port of Tacloban, Philippines. Herbert H. Haley, age 26, was listed as Chief Radio Operator, having signed onto the vessel on March 1, 1945 — just days after the Broadcasting Magazine notice of his enlistment. He stood five feet eleven inches tall, U.S. citizen, and was responsible for the ship's radio communications across the Pacific theater during one of the most active phases of the war.

Four months later, on October 8, 1945, the S.S. Cape Ann arrived at San Francisco from the port of Eniwetok Marshall Islands. Herbert was again listed as Chief Radio Operator, age 27, having signed on July 6, 1945.

Margaret's oral history adds a detail absent from the ship manifests: at the war's end, Herbert's ship was en route to Manila in the Philippines, putting him downwind of both atomic bomb blasts over Japan. She recalled wondering, later in life, whether that exposure had any connection to the leukemia that killed him in 1970.

> *The U.S. Merchant Marine in 1945 was the supply lifeline of the American war effort, suffering casualty rates among its crews comparable to or exceeding those of some armed services. The Chief Radio Operator was the senior communications officer on board, responsible for receiving and*

> *transmitting all ship-to-shore traffic, navigation signals, and emergency communications — a role that built directly on Herbert's first-class FCC license and his decade of experience at the key.*

By November 19, 1945, the trade press was reporting that Herb Haley, released from the Merchant Marine, had rejoined KGO San Francisco as announcer. He had served roughly nine months at sea.

SPRINGFIELD, OHIO: WJEL-WJEM (1947–1949)

Margaret's oral history explains what prompted the move to Ohio: when Herb returned to KGO after the war, he found that sponsors and accounts who had valued him before had been picked up by other announcers during his absence — one sponsor, she recalled, told him he had wanted Herb for an assignment but had been told he "wasn't back" yet.

In June 1947, Herbert made another major career move. Broadcasting Magazine for June 30th covered a double event: the new stations WJEL (500 watts on 1600 kc) and WJEM-FM (1 kw on 103.9 mc) were going on the air the previous day in Springfield, Ohio. The licensee was Champion City Broadcasting Co., principal owners Dr. D. J. Parsons (60%), Bill Erin formerly of KGO San Francisco (30%), and John Harwood of Lagonda Printing Co. (10%). Staff: Bill Erin as general manager; Douglas Campbell, commercial manager; and Herbert Haley, former KGO commentator, as chief engineer.

> *Family oral history recalls Herbert as having been a part-owner of Champion City Broadcasting Co., the WJEL/WJEM licensee. The contemporary Broadcasting Magazine ownership listing (Parsons 60%, Erin 30%, Harwood 10%) does not include him as an owner. The discrepancy is unresolved and is noted.*

It was a homecoming of sorts for the partnership with Bill Erin, who had moved from KGO to start his own station and had brought Herb along as the technical and programming heart of the operation. The dual position — chief engineer and on-air newscaster — reflected exactly the combination of technical and broadcasting skill that Herbert had been building since the Mac-Hi Pioneer Radio Club. The Springfield News-Sun's Open House advertisement of October 24, 1947, featured Herb Haley among the local radio personalities the public was invited to meet at the new studios in the Columbia Building, 101 N. Fountain Avenue.

His on-air work at WJEL became a fixture in Springfield through 1947 and 1948. The summer 1947 advertisements promoted "HERB HALEY ... Tops In News" as one of the station's

featured personalities, with a 6:45 P.M. daily news slot, then later a 5:00–5:15 Monday-through-Friday "Top of the News" for the Vogue Shop. The August 31, 1947, Springfield News-Sun ran a large display advertisement with his photograph, headed "Your Favorite News Voice On The Air — HERB HALEY reporting The Top Of The News for the Vogue Shop."

> *The 1947 photograph in the Springfield News-Sun is the clearest image of Herbert Haley as a working radio professional. He is in his late twenties, dark-haired, in a suit and patterned tie, with the steady, deliberate look of a newsman. The advertisement places him squarely in the post-war pattern of local radio: a named, sponsored newscaster with a regular daily slot, presented to the listening public as a personality in his own right.*

On December 21, 1947, WJEL presented "The Gift of the Magi," O. Henry's immortal Christmas story, starring Dorothy Lamming, Rod Serling, Susan Krapp, and Herb Haley. Rod Serling — not yet thirty, not yet the creator of The Twilight Zone, but already a young radio writer in Springfield's broadcasting world — was a colleague. In fact, Herb gave Rod Serling his first radio job.

> *Family oral history recorded from Herbert's daughter Mardi Haley Briggs in 2025 adds a personal dimension to the Serling connection: the young writer was a frequent visitor to the Haley home, sometimes babysitting Mardi and her sister Randi. He entertained the girls by having them jump from the top of the family's Servel gas refrigerator into his arms, and by running around the house clowning as a monkey.*

The March 7, 1948, Springfield News-Sun noted that Herbert Haley of WJEL would address the Exchange Club at its luncheon meeting Tuesday in Hotel Shawnee, on "Accumulation, Preparation and Presentation of News Over the Air." He was teaching the trade as well as practicing it.

The June 2, 1948, paper carried a more dramatic story: a first-hand account of the disastrous Vanport, Oregon flood, given to the Springfield Amateur Radio Club by "Herb Haley of Possum rd., a radio 'ham' with call letters W8CDT," who had reached a Vanport "ham", George Wise, who had escaped the fury of the flood. Herb related Wise's account of having driven the last automobile from the Vanport project, escaping inundation by approximately 25 feet, and racing the flood like "someone trying to beat a train to the crossing." Mr. Wise had explained, Herb told the gathering, that amateur radio operators in the stricken area had played an important part in getting messages regarding survivors to their relatives.

> *The Vanport flood of May 30, 1948 — in which the Columbia River dike protecting the wartime housing project at Vanport, Oregon, gave way — destroyed the second-largest city in the state in a matter of hours. Amateur radio operators played a significant role in relaying messages out of the flood zone, and Herbert's relay of George Wise's account from Vanport to a Springfield, Ohio audience is a small piece of evidence of how the amateur radio network functioned during emergencies. His call sign W8CDT places him in the Eighth Call District (Ohio), reflecting his post-1947 move. The personal connection back to Oregon — to the Columbia River country where his wife Margaret had grown up and her parents had worked, and where his old Vancouver Barracks CCC posting sat just up the river from the flooded site — would have given the relay particular meaning.*

He was a property owner now too. The August 16, 1947, Springfield News-Sun real estate transactions show Richard Barnes Schmidt transferring Springfield Township property to Herbert H. Haley et ux — "et ux" being the Latin abbreviation for "and wife," confirming Margaret. The 1949 Broadcasting Yearbook entry for WJEM-FM lists him as program director and chief engineer, with Frank N. Jones as general and commercial manager.

DAYTON: WHIO AND DEPARTURE FOR CALIFORNIA (1949–1951)

By August 1949, Herbert took a position with WHIO, the major Dayton station. The August 16, 1949, Dayton Daily News advertisement listed his 7:30 A.M. news slot — "Bob Campbell & Herb Haley" — as one of WHIO's daily news programs. The October 2nd Dayton Daily News carried a small newsroom anecdote in its "Waves" column: Herb Haley, WHIO announcer, had come into the studio where two turntables were busy whirling out a transcribed program; Herb, the columnist noted with affectionate exasperation, who is a veteran radio man, absent-mindedly lifted the needle off the platter that was on the air.

The story was small, but it captures something true about him — a man so familiar with broadcasting that he could absent-mindedly disable his own program. He was thirty-one years old by then, with twelve years in radio behind him.

> *According to family oral history, WHIO was transitioning from radio into television during Herbert's time there, and he was instrumental in that transformation — a natural next step for a man who had combined chief-engineer and on-air roles since his Mac-Hi radio-club days.*

The move away from Ohio was hard-won, according to Margaret's account: Springfield's market could not support two competing radio stations, and advertisers began threatening to

shift their money to the newspaper instead. The family spent five years in Ohio, by Margaret's account four of them spent trying to extricate themselves without a significant financial loss.

The December 19, 1951, Springfield News-Sun real estate transactions recorded the other end of the Springfield chapter: Herbert H. Haley et ux to Allan R. Montjar et ux — the Springfield Township property, now sold and transferred. The Haleys were leaving Ohio.

THE JOURNEY BACK TO CALIFORNIA (1951)

No documentary record has yet surfaced for the family's movements between the December 1951 sale of the Springfield property and their appearance in the March 1954 CQ Radio Amateurs' Journal photograph, but family oral history recorded from daughter Mardi Haley Briggs fills the gap. Herbert had quit his Ohio broadcasting jobs for a position lined up with ABC in Los Angeles, and the family drove west along Route 66 in a Chevrolet station wagon — nine-year-old Mardi and her sister Randi in the back seat, baby Melissa riding on the rear shelf. The trip included a stop in Rollo, Missouri, memorable for a mouse or rat Herbert found in the motel bathtub (he wrote AAA a complaint) and a night at a grand hotel in Albuquerque.

The promised ABC job fell through upon arrival, leaving the family stranded for a time in a motel on Highland Avenue near the Hollywood Bowl. Despite the financial uncertainty, the children found bicycles under the tree that Christmas. Herbert enrolled his daughters at Sherman Oaks School directly from the motel, driving them to and from class until the family could settle into a house at 4507 Stansbury Avenue in Sherman Oaks — the same address that would later appear in his 1956 Southern California DX Club directory listing.

Margaret's 1996 oral history corroborates and adds to Mardi's account of the family's arrival. Staying in the motel just before Christmas, Herbert telephoned the Schwinn bicycle company directly to arrange bicycles for the two older girls as presents. Randi promptly rode her new bike into a parked car; the car's owner, Margaret recalled, waved off any concern — "Hey, it's Christmas, my insurance will take care of it." The blow came the day after Christmas, when Herbert called the prospective employer and learned the anticipated merger had fallen through and there was, after all, no job.

With no job secured, Herbert renewed his seaman's papers so he could ship out with the Merchant Marine again if necessary, and instead found work with a company pioneering electronics sales — a first step, per Margaret's account, toward the technical-sales career that

would culminate at Newark Electronics. The early going was rocky: as soon as he built up a territory to the point of real earnings (reaching about two thousand dollars a month at one point), the company would cut the territory in half and hire someone else to cover the rest, a pattern Margaret recalled repeating about four times across two employers before he settled in for the long run.

CALIFORNIA: SHERMAN OAKS, TARZANA, AND AMATEUR RADIO (1954–1970)

By March 1954 the family was in California, and Herbert had taken up a new identity within the amateur radio world. The CQ Radio Amateurs' Journal for March 1954 carried a photograph of the distinguished group attending the 5th Annual Joint DX Conference of the Northern and Southern California DX Clubs.

The 1956 Directory of the Southern California DX Club lists W6VBY HERB HALEY, 4507 Stansbury Ave, Sherman Oaks — a member of the Los Angeles Council of Radio Clubs. He had settled into the San Fernando Valley, and the call sign W6VBY would identify him for the rest of his amateur career.

> *DX'ing — the pursuit of contacting distant amateur stations, often in remote countries — was the prestige discipline within amateur radio. The Southern California and Northern California DX Clubs were among the most prominent in the United States, and their joint conferences brought together the most accomplished operators in the country. Herb Haley's appearance in the 1954 conference photograph and his subsequent membership listings establish him as a recognized figure in this community throughout the 1950s and 1960s.*

The house at 5118 Cerrillos Drive — the setting of the 1963 radio-relay story below — was custom-built for the family in Woodland Hills after several years in Sherman Oaks. Margaret's oral history recalls that Herbert specifically wanted a hilltop lot so he could put up his ham antenna, and that she designed the house herself, touring other houses for sale to gather ideas and working out the plans with a contractor; construction took about four months, and the family visited the site for picnics to watch its progress, moving in around 1957. Herbert set up his station in a garage extension there; Margaret recalled the hobby as an "obsession" that occupied him for hours at a stretch.

The most vivid surviving glimpse of his California amateur career comes from the January 4, 1963, Van Nuys News and Valley Green Sheet, which carried a front-page photograph and

story headlined "Radio Reunites Husband In Peru With Spouse Here." A Northridge doctor and his wife, separated by thousands of miles of land and ocean, had been reunited briefly by radio through the efforts of two Valley ham radio operators — one in Woodland Hills and the other on Christmas Island in the Pacific. Mrs. Harry Kinsling, seated before a microphone in the home of Herbert Haley at 5118 Cerrillos Drive, was able to speak to Martin Blackstone on Christmas Island, who in turn relayed her words to her husband Dr. Harry Kinsling, stationed aboard the SS Hope, anchored at Salavarry, Peru.

Dr. Kinsling was serving with Project Hope, the floating medical facility, performing up to fifty major surgical operations a day. The relay had been necessitated by atmospheric conditions which had prevented direct radio contact with the ship. Herbert Haley — by then forty-four years old, working from his home station, was the linchpin of the Sherman Oaks end of the relay. The photograph shows him at his radio gear, intent and capable, with the rack of equipment behind him that any 1960s amateur would have recognized at a glance.

By the late 1960s the family had moved a short distance south within the San Fernando Valley to 6117 Shirley Avenue, Tarzana. His California Driver License, issued March 27, 1969, gives his address as Tarzana 91356, his height as five feet eleven, his weight as 176 pounds, his hair as brown, his eyes as blue. The photograph on the license shows a fifty-year-old man in horn-rimmed glasses, balding, with the settled, slightly bemused expression of someone who has been photographed for too many license renewals to find the experience interesting.

At the Shirley Avenue house, Margaret recalled resisting Herbert's wish to put up a sixty-foot antenna until he had finished other work around the property; friends eventually helped him install it. After his death, she said, taking the antenna down was one of the first things attended to.

The death certificate records his last occupation as Sales Engineer in the electronics industry, employed by Newark Electronics for nineteen years. The career arc had moved on from broadcasting to the technical-sales side of the electronics distribution business — a transition that drew on the same FCC license and technical knowledge that had carried him through twenty-five years of radio work. Newark Electronics, founded in 1934 in Chicago, was by the 1950s and 1960s one of the major distributors of electronic components in the United States, supplying the burgeoning aerospace, defense, and consumer electronics industries of Southern California.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS: HOME LIFE AND CHARACTER

The documentary record traces Herbert's public and professional life in detail; the 2025 oral history recorded from his daughter Mardi supplies the private side. At home in Sherman Oaks and Tarzana, he watched television lying on the floor in front of the round-screen set, using his feet to change channels and adjust the volume while propping his head on his hand — enjoying boxing matches and roller derby in particular. Mardi noted the irony that a career television and radio announcer's own family was among the last in the neighborhood to own a television set.

Politically, Herbert was liberal despite having come from a conservative family, a stance his daughter attributed partly to his parents' generation having come through the Depression. Religiously he ranged widely without settling: he took the family to Vacation Bible School with his brother Ben and sister-in-law Mildred, and briefly explored Unitarian Universalism at services in Santa Monica. When his junior-high-age daughter was teased and mistaken for Jewish because of her features, and asked him about it while wearing a cross a friend had given her to disguise her supposed religion, his reply — "What's wrong with being Jewish?"

Mardi remembered quiet evenings eating graham crackers with warm milk poured over them in the kitchen after he came home from work, and his fondness for phonetic word puzzles ("F-U-N-E-X?" read aloud as "Have you any eggs?") and nonsense songs. He impressed on her the importance of avoiding mediocrity and of approaching new challenges with confidence — lessons she cited as touchstones throughout her own life. The family was also devoted to the Los Angeles Dodgers after the team's 1957 move from Brooklyn, attending games in the left-field bleachers and once dressing in matching purple-and-white outfits Margaret sewed for the whole family, Herbert included.

> *By his daughter's account, Herbert "wasn't a warm, fuzzy person," and was not a social man by temperament, but she "really, really looked up to" him. This section draws entirely on the 2025 oral history rather than contemporary documentation.*

DEATH: NOVEMBER 28, 1970

Herbert H. Haley died at 2:15 a.m. on November 28, 1970, at the UCLA Medical Center, West Los Angeles. He was fifty-two years old. The death certificate records the cause of death as cardio-respiratory failure (24 hours), due to sepsis (24 hours), due to acute myelogenous

leukemia (2 months). A bone marrow aspiration had been performed during the course of his illness; he had been an inpatient at UCLA from November 1, 1970, until his death twenty-eight days later.

He was cremated on December 2, 1970, at Forest Lawn Memorial Park (Hollywood Hills), with arrangements by Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills Mortuary. His wife Margaret — listed on the death certificate as Mrs. Margaret Haley, of 6117 Shirley Avenue, Tarzana, California 91356 — was the informant. They had been married twenty-nine years.

> *Family oral history adds a personal detail to the clinical record: Mardi, then a young mother in Oceanside, learned of her father's diagnosis through a long letter from Margaret, and the family chose not to discuss the prognosis openly. Alone with him at UCLA Medical Center, Mardi recalled, he asked her to "make sure I took care of things" — the closest he came to acknowledging what was happening.* *Acute myelogenous leukemia (AML) in 1970 had limited treatment options. Bone marrow aspiration was used both for diagnosis and to assess treatment response; the two-month interval from diagnosis to death indicates a rapid clinical course. The death certificate's listing of Newark Electronics as his last employer for nineteen years ("Industry: Electronics") places his career-change to electronics sales at approximately 1951 — within months of his sale of the Springfield property and his departure from Ohio.*

SUMMARY

Herbert H. Haley was the youngest child of Benjamin Thomas Haley and Maria Catherine (Kate) Whicker and the only one of his siblings to make a national professional career out of the amateur radio enthusiasm that had taken root at McLoughlin Union High School in 1934. He lost his mother at ten and his father at thirteen, watched the family farm in Freewater liquidated by the county court when he was seventeen, served fifteen months in the CCC at Vancouver Barracks at eighteen and nineteen — declaring on his enrollment application that he was "Interested in Radio" as his post-Corps career goal — took a Kresge's clerk job in Iowa during the brief interval after his discharge, and then built a working life out of the one piece of his Mac-Hi years that translated into adult employment: a first-class FCC radio license and a steady, articulate voice that small-town and big-city stations alike were willing to put on the air.

From KJU Walla Walla in 1939 to KLBM La Grande in 1939 to KBKR Baker in 1940 to KMED Medford in 1942 to KGO San Francisco from 1942 to 1947, with a Merchant Marine interlude as Chief Radio Operator on the SS Flying Arrow and SS Cape Ann during 1945, then

to WJEL Springfield, Ohio, from 1947 to 1949, then to WHIO Dayton, then to California — the career arc traces the entire transition of American radio from local-station broadcasting through network dominance to the postwar local-television era. He was on KGO when KGO was a major Blue Network station; he was on the air with Rod Serling at WJEL when Serling was a local writer; he was on the cut-in scenes for the 1942 Voc-A-News election broadcast that was one of the era's significant innovations in election coverage. After 1951 he made the technical-sales transition that broadcasting careers of the era frequently demanded, working as a sales engineer with Newark Electronics in Southern California for the last nineteen years of his life.

And then, both before and after broadcasting, came the longer parallel life as an amateur radio operator — amateur DX'er, member of the Southern California DX Club, phone-patch operator for SS Hope wives, citizen of the Los Angeles amateur radio community for a quarter of a century.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Civilian Conservation Corps records — Herbert H. Haley, CCC No. 234813, Oregon Junior; Application for Enrollment dated April 7, 1936 (Umatilla County Relief, Pendleton); Oath of Enrollment, Vancouver Barracks, Washington, April 9, 1936 (Capt. V. J. Gregory, F.A.-Res.); Personal History, August 21, 1936; Record of Physical Examination (Maj. C. D. Pillsbury, M.C., April 9, 1936; discharge physical Lt. Col. C. D. Pillsbury, M.C., July 5, 1937); discharged Honorably from Co. DHD, Vancouver Barracks, July 5, 1937, by 1st Lt. Alfred H. Hopkins, Inf-Reserve. Pay allotment $25.00/month to Miss Billie Haley c/o E. L. Jamison, Freewater, Oregon.

U.S. Social Security Account Number Application — Herbert H. Haley, S.S. Form SS-5; account number 464-10-4050; date of birth March 28, 1918, at Freewater, Oregon; mother Catharine Mary Whicker; father Benjamin Thomas Haley; employer S. S. Kresge Dollar Store, 219 East 4th Street, Waterloo, Iowa; signed August 7, 1937.

Certificate of Marriage No. 8849 — Herbert Haley and Margaret E. Burnett, State of Washington, County of Clark; license issued April 28, 1941, Skamania County; ceremony May 10, 1941, Vancouver, Washington; officiant Rev. John W. Pressly, Presbyterian clergyman; witnesses George J. Schatz and C. H. Burnett; filed May 13, 1941.

Selective Service Registration Card — Herbert H. Haley, Serial No. 1797, Order No. 1799; Local Board No. 1, Baker County, Oregon; address 2315 Second Street, Baker, Oregon; date of birth March 28, 1918, Freewater, Oregon; employer Elwood Lippincott, KBKR, Weil Building, Baker; person who will always know your address: Mr. Benjamin Haley (brother), 332 W. 119th Street, Los Angeles, California; signed by registrant; July 1941.

List or Manifest of Aliens Employed on the Vessel as Members of Crew — S.S. Flying Arrow, arriving San Francisco June 1, 1945, from Tacloban, P.I.; Herbert H. Haley, Chief Radio Operator, signed on March 1, 1945; age 26; U.S. citizen; height 5'11". War Shipping Administration, U.S. Department of Justice; Sheet F1, 1300-20288.

List or Manifest of Aliens Employed on the Vessel as Members of Crew — S.S. Cape Ann, arriving San Francisco October 8, 1945, from Bremerhaven, Germany; Herbert H. Haley, Chief Radio Operator, signed on July 6, 1945; age 27; U.S. citizen; height 5'11". War Shipping Administration; American Mail Line, Ltd.; Sheet 4, 1300-26123.

California Driver License No. D119052 — Herbert "H" Haley, 6117 Shirley Avenue, Tarzana, California 91356; height 5'11", weight 176; brown hair, blue eyes; date of birth March 28, 1918; issued March 27, 1969 (expires on birthday 1973); Class 3.

Certificate of Death — Herbert H. Haley, State of California, Department of Public Health; State File No. 70-163033; Local Reg. No. 7097-048814; principal cause: cardio-respiratory failure; underlying cause: acute myelogenous leukemia; physician Patrick W. Foster, M.D.; informant Mrs. Margaret Haley, 6117 Shirley Avenue, Tarzana; filed December 2, 1970.

Newspaper Sources

The East Oregonian (Pendleton, Oregon) • Oct. 28, 1927 (East End Apple Show, exhibitors) • Jan. 21, 1932 (Boy Scouts, county news) • Aug. 26, 1933 (guardianship, estate sale) • Jan. 25, 1935 (Pioneer Radio Club, code-practicing) • Feb. 2, 1935 (Pioneer Radio Club station license, officers) • Feb. 8, 1935 (Mac-Hi radio club antenna construction) • Feb. 15, 1935 (Pioneer Radio Club transmitter installation) • Mar. 19, 1935 (Mac-Hi opera "Ship Ahoy") • May 15, 1935 (Mac-Hi graduation, class of 1935) • Apr. 3, 1936 (Rover Scout investiture, Walla Walla)

The Spokesman-Review (Spokane, Washington) • Nov. 17, 1931 (obituary, B. T. Haley)

The Greene Recorder (Greene, Iowa) • Aug. 4, 1937 (Herbert Haley visiting Mrs. Helen Scripture, midwest tour)

Nyssa Gate City Journal (Nyssa, Oregon) • May 18, 1939 (Buena Vista, visit to Mrs. E. L. Jamison)

La Grande Evening Observer (La Grande, Oregon) • Jun. 26, 1939 (Bryant and Haley business trip to Portland) • Jul. 8, 1939 ("Two Get Licenses" — first-class radio telephone operators' licenses)

The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) • Nov. 25, 1939 ("Bonnie Baker & Rock" letter, KLBM La Grande) • Jan. 15, 1942 ("Medford Newscaster Speaks" letter, KMED Medford)

Variety, Radio Directory (Volume IV, 1940–1941) p. 676 (KBKR Baker staff listing)

Radio Daily: The 1940 Radio Annual p. 492 (KBKR Baker personnel)

Baker City Herald (Baker, Oregon) • Mar. 20, 1940 (Elks Lodge initiation) • Jul. 9, 1941 (Selective Service Questionnaire 1799)

Medford Mail Tribune (Medford, Oregon) • Mar. 3, 1942 (birth notice, daughter Mardi)

Broadcasting Magazine • Jun. 8, 1942 (KGO San Francisco appointment) • May 22, 1944 (birth of daughter, KGO) • Mar. 26, 1945 (joins U.S. Maritime Service) • Nov. 19, 1945 (returns from Merchant Marine to KGO) • Jun. 30, 1947 (WJEL/WJEM Springfield, Ohio launch)

San Francisco Chronicle • Nov. 1, 1942 (Voc-A-News election broadcast lineup) • Nov. 2, 1942 ("Herb Haley At The Chronicle" photograph) • Nov. 3, 1942 ("Election Night" feature) • Nov. 4, 1942 (election broadcast staff photograph) • Jun. 15, 1943 (Flag Day ceremonies) • Nov. 3, 1943 ("KGO Mirrors Election From Chronicle") • Jan. 16, 1944 (Shasta News advertisement, KGO)

Springfield News-Sun (Springfield, Ohio) • Jun. 22, 1947 (WJEL launch advertisement) • Jul. 2, 1947 ("Flash" Vogue Shop newscast) • Jul. 6, 1947 (WJEL/WJEM featured personalities) • Jul. 20, 1947 ("Tops" personalities advertisement) • Jul. 21, 1947 (program schedule) • Aug. 16, 1947 (real estate, property acquired) • Aug. 31, 1947 (Vogue Shop news, photograph) • Oct. 24, 1947 (Open House advertisement) • Dec. 21, 1947 ("Gift of the Magi"

radio drama with Rod Serling) • Mar. 7, 1948 (Exchange Club address) • Jun. 2, 1948 (Vanport flood relay, W8CDT) • Aug. 24, 1948 (Veterans Day Parade committee) • May 18, 1949 (Mercy Hospital fundraising) • Dec. 19, 1951 (real estate, property disposed)

Broadcast Telecasting: 1949 Yearbook p. 312 (WJEM-FM Springfield 58, program director and chief engineer)

Dayton Daily News (Dayton, Ohio) • Aug. 16, 1949 (WHIO daily news schedule, Bob Campbell & Herb Haley) • Oct. 2, 1949 ("Waves" column anecdote, WHIO turntable)

CQ Radio Amateurs' Journal March 1954, p. 39 (5th Annual Joint DX Conference photograph, Herb Haley W6VBY)

The Directory of the Southern California DX Club 1956, p. 18 (W6VBY, 4507 Stansbury Ave, Sherman Oaks)

The Van Nuys News and Valley Green Sheet • Jan. 4, 1963 ("Radio Reunites Husband In Peru With Spouse Here," photograph, 5118 Cerrillos Drive)

Family and Genealogical Sources

"Personal History of Mardi Haley Briggs" — Compiled by Mike Briggs from oral history interviews recorded with his mother, Mardi Haley Briggs, on July 29, August 17, and September 3, 2025; an edited narrative compilation drawn from the recordings, not a verbatim transcript, drafted September 4, 2025. As used in this biography, provides detail absent from the documentary record: Rod Serling's visits to the Haley home and his babysitting of Mardi and Randi during the Springfield years; the family's 1951 Route 66 return journey to California and the collapsed ABC job on arrival; Herbert's home life, television habits, religious and political views, and character as recalled by his daughter; and the circumstances of his final illness and death at UCLA Medical Center. Note: the oral history recalls Herbert as a part-owner of Champion City Broadcasting Co. (licensee of WJEL/WJEM); this conflicts with the ownership breakdown reported contemporaneously in Broadcasting Magazine (Dr. D. J. Parsons 60%, Bill Erin 30%, John Harwood 10%) and has not been incorporated into the narrative pending further verification. Oral history is otherwise treated as reliable for texture and detail but subordinate to documentary evidence for dates and facts.

"The Life Story of Margaret Haley: A Personal Narrative (through the early 1960s)" — Based on the oral history recorded from Margaret Haley on November 24, 1996; edited narrative compilation, not a verbatim transcript, drafted July 25, 2025. Covers Margaret's life through her courtship and marriage to Herbert, wartime years, the family's postwar moves through Ohio and back to California, and their life in Sherman Oaks and Woodland Hills. As used in this biography, provides detail on Herbert absent from the documentary record: their courtship at KODL, The Dalles; his 1943 OWI "Weekly War Journal" broadcasting work; the draft reclassifications preceding his Merchant Marine enlistment and his ship's proximity to Japan at war's end; the family's departure from San Francisco and years in Ohio; the collapse of the anticipated ABC position in Los Angeles and the family's interim years in electronics sales; and the building of the Woodland Hills house around his amateur radio antenna. Note: Margaret's account of Herbert's KODL employment is not independently corroborated by the contemporary newspaper record consulted for this biography but is consistent with the Wasco County residence recorded on the couple's 1941 marriage certificate. The recording was part of a planned two-part discussion; Margaret died on April 6, 1997, before a second session could be held.

MARGARET ELLEN BURNETT

University of Oregon Graduate • Schnauzer Breeder

ALBERTA • OREGON • OHIO • CALIFORNIA

Also known as: Margaret E. Burnett • Margaret Burnett Haley • Margaret Haley

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	January 2, 1918, Irene Cottage Hospital, Peace River, Alberta, Canada
DIED	April 6, 1997, Tarzana, Los Angeles County, California (age 79)
BURIAL	IOOF Cemetery, The Dalles, Oregon
FATHER	Melbourne Leroy Burnett (1885–1937)
MOTHER	Daisy May Propst (1897–1997)
MARRIED	May 10, 1941, Vancouver, Clark County, Washington, to Herbert H. Haley (1918–1970)
CHILDREN	Mardi Lynn Haley (1942–) Randi Lee Haley (1944–) Melissa Leah Haley (1950–2019)
SIBLINGS	Melbourne Armour Burnett (1917–1917) Claude Howard Burnett (1919–1999) Laura May Burnett (1920–2016)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Margaret Ellen Burnett was born on January 2, 1918, at the Irene Cottage Hospital in Peace River, Alberta, the eldest surviving child of Melbourne Leroy Burnett and Daisy May Propst. Both parents were telegraph operators on the Alberta provincial government line that had brought them together; her father was at that time stationed at Dunvegan; the family having come into Peace River for the birth. The Alberta Certificate of Registration of Birth, filed January 23, 1918, records her parentage and place of birth simply: father Melbourne Burnett, mother Daisy May Propst, place of birth Peace River.

She was born into a household marked by both joy and recent grief. Her parents had lost their first child — Melbourne Armour Burnett, born January 4, 1917 — in April of that year, at not

yet three months of age. The little boy had been buried in the Peace River cemetery, and by the time of Margaret's birth her mother had spent much of the previous year recovering. In her own oral history, recorded in November 1996, Margaret recalled that her mother had contracted erysipelas during that hospital stay and that the infant had caught it as well. This was the likely cause of young Melbourne's death — the hospital, she said, had taken responsibility and waived its bills. The letter her father wrote to her mother on the day of her own birth — transcribed and preserved in family papers — captures the moment with unusual directness:

> *"So it's all over now? My I am glad! What does she look like? How heavy? How nice if our little boy had lived, but I did want a boy since he died, though I am not sorry. Little girls are much neater and prettier… This is my day off in celebration. Wait till you get home. Won't I hug and kiss the two of you." — Melbourne L. Burnett to Daisy Burnett, Home, January 2, 1918*

He had received the news by telegraph, driven to the Hudson Bay Company post to mail his earlier letters, brought back the violin from the office, and played for half the afternoon. He had not done a single tap of work that day except feed the stock. In a small, isolated, frontier posting where the temperature outside could fall to fifty below, that day was a celebration of one man and his fiddle.

Margaret's father Melbourne was a New Brunswick schoolteacher's son who had come west to work the telegraph line; her mother Daisy was the youngest child of Henry Taylor Propst, an Oregon pioneer who had crossed the plains as a toddler in 1852. The family network extended back to Linn County, Oregon, on the Propst side, and to Petitcodiac, New Brunswick, on the Burnett side.

> *Peace River, Alberta, in January 1918 was a small frontier service town in the far north of the province, recently the western terminus of the railway and the social hub for an enormous catchment of homesteaders and government telegraph employees. The Irene Cottage Hospital, where Margaret was born, was a small private hospital that handled deliveries for families coming in from outlying postings such as Dunvegan.*

EARLY LIFE: ALBERTA AND OREGON (1918–1928)

The newspapers of the Peace River country tracked Margaret's first weeks of life with the warmth small frontier papers reserved for births in well-known families. The Edmonton Bulletin for January 7, 1918, ran the bare announcement: "On Wednesday, January 2, 1918, at

Irene Cottage hospital, Peace River, a daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. M. Burnett, Dunvegan." The Peace River Record's January 18th column noted that Mrs. M. L. Burnett and little daughter were visiting the home of Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Ridley in town. A week later the same paper recorded that Mr. Burnett had returned to Dunvegan with his wife and baby daughter in a covered caboose with striped awning, seats, and a small heating stove — the most comfortable rig in the country.

Six weeks after she was born, her parents celebrated their second wedding anniversary at Dunvegan with a dance. The mercury stood at fifty below; sleigh loads came from up to twenty-three miles away. By December 1918, when Margaret was just under a year old, her parents disposed of their personal effects in Dunvegan and left on Tuesday's train for Portland, Oregon. The move was framed publicly as a health measure for her father, who had been troubled by rheumatism in the cold and damp of the northern Alberta winters. It proved permanent. Margaret would grow up not in the Peace River country but in the Columbia River country of north-central Oregon.

Her younger siblings followed quickly: a brother, Claude Howard, was born at Maupin, Oregon, in June 1919, and a sister, Laura May, at Umatilla in December 1920. The three children were all spaced about eighteen months apart — "about as close as you can be," as Margaret would later put it. After Laura, there were no more children.

She was a Canadian citizen by birth, however, and her status had to be formally regularized as she grew up. The Vancouver, British Columbia, Manifest record dated September 8, 1928 — when Margaret was ten years old — shows her returning to the United States in the company of her father from Peace River, Alberta, with a status notation indicating Section 4(c) of the 1924 immigration act. The accompanying U.S. Department of Labor Immigrant Identification Card, also dated September 8, 1928, preserves a small photograph of her: a serious-looking girl with bobbed dark hair, blue eyes, in a white collared blouse with a dark tie. The card bears her own signature — "Margaret Burnett" — in a careful schoolgirl hand, and is the earliest photograph of her that survives in the family record.

> *Section 4(c) of the Immigration Act of 1924 was the provision under which Canadian-born children of American citizens could be admitted to the United States as non-quota immigrants. The 1928 visit may have been a routine summer trip back to Alberta, where her uncle Howard L. Propst still farmed; the formal documentation suggests this was treated as her official immigrant entry, regularizing her status for life in the United States.*

CHILDHOOD AT THE BIGGS DEPOT

Sometime around 1922 or 1923, when Margaret was four or five, her father took the post of station agent for the Union Pacific Railroad at Biggs, a tiny stop on the Columbia River about twenty miles east of The Dalles. The family lived in the depot itself — office and bay window in front, freight shed running alongside, kitchen and living room and bedrooms attached — about eight to ten feet from the railroad tracks. There was no electricity, no telephone, and at first only outhouses set back from the line. Lighting came from gasoline mantle lanterns suspended from wires; cooking and heating from a wood stove that ran even in summer when the temperature in the depot reached 115 degrees and Daisy was putting up jam.

The Biggs of Margaret's childhood was a town of roughly twenty people — the depot, a house for the train crew, and a school. Trains came through constantly to take on water and blow off steam; she remembered her father once mentioning that seventeen had passed through in a single night. There was a one-room schoolhouse for the local children, where she completed first and second grade in a single year and where she had taught herself to read before she ever started. By the time she reached the higher grades, she was riding a bicycle six miles each way on the highway to the consolidated school at Rufus, where all twelve grades shared a two-story building.

The Burnett family appeared regularly in the Oregon social columns through the 1920s and 1930s. In November 1923 the Albany Democrat placed Mr. and Mrs. Melbourne Burnett and children of Biggs at a large surprise gathering at the J. W. Propst home at Knox Butte — the Propst family's ancestral country in the Willamette Valley. By January 1930 her parents had been installed as officers of Annie Fulton Chapter No. 124, Order of the Eastern Star, at Wasco. Margaret was twelve years old, and the world of fraternal lodges, station agents' dinners, and Columbia River summers was the steady backdrop of her childhood.

> *Margaret's relationship with her father, by her own later account, was shaped by a combination of admiration and fear. Melbourne Burnett was a small man — five foot seven, as he liked to say — with the firm convictions and short patience common to the railway agents of his generation. Margaret recalled that argument was simply not permitted in the household, and that the impulse to please him remained with her throughout her life.*

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON: 1936–1938

There were four students in Margaret's graduating class at Rufus High School. She worked, by her own description, like a dog and earned grades in the 94–100 range across the board — her father had promised her a wristwatch if she kept it up, and she got the watch. In the spring of 1936 she enrolled at the University of Oregon at Eugene. The cultural shock was considerable: she had grown up without electricity or a telephone, and the first phone call she ever received was at her sorority house, where she stood at the receiver not knowing what to say.

She moved easily into campus life nonetheless. The Register-Guard for March 29, 1936, listed her in the Alpha Delta Pi pledge class — hometown given as Biggs, age eighteen. The Sunday Oregonian for June 28, 1936, included her on the spring-term student-recognition list. In November of that year she served on the publicity committee for the sophomore class' annual dance, "Good Ship Swing Time," and by the winter of 1937–38 she had taken up small-bore rifle shooting and earned a place on the women's rifle team. The Register-Guard's feature for February 11, 1938 — under the cheerful headline "Girls To 'Shoot It Out' on Campus Here This Week" — named her among the Oregon team members who would face the University of Washington's many-times national champions. The Oregonian covered the same event the next day.

On September 24, 1938, the Register-Guard reported that seventy-eight University of Oregon students had earned junior certificates with honors privileges — a scholastic standing granted only to those who had done superior work during their first two years on campus. The list included "Margaret E. Burnett, Biggs." She would carry a 3.9 grade point average through her undergraduate work.

> *Margaret's own later account of her college years included a darker episode: a rifle-team coach who, during a private session at the campus armory, made what she understood at nineteen to be inappropriate physical advances under the guise of checking her breathing as she lay prone on the firing line. A sudden nosebleed gave her cover to leave. She told the story sixty years later as one of the moments her body had saved her.*

THE DEATH OF HER FATHER: OCTOBER 1937

Margaret was nineteen years old, in her sophomore year at Oregon, when her father died. Melbourne Burnett and Daisy had come down to Eugene for homecoming weekend, attended the football game and dinner at Margaret's sorority, and left to return to Biggs by train. From

Eugene the route required a transfer at Portland's Union Station. Aboard the eastbound train, her father reached up to put a suitcase on the overhead rack, sat down, leaned his head back, closed his eyes — and was gone. Daisy, sitting beside him, thought at first that he had only fainted. He was lifted off the train at the depot, and someone came out to her with his rings and his watch.

The official cause of death, per the Multnomah County certificate, was coronary thrombosis, with hypertension as a contributing cause. Margaret recalled in 1996 that her father had previously been pulled out of railroad service for high blood pressure and had been placed on a strict diet — a banana and lettuce, as he summarized it — before being cleared to return to work. Daisy declined an autopsy. Margaret's sorority house mother came to her room around 11:30 that night to say that her brother had come for her; he had driven up from The Dalles after Daisy's call. Her father was fifty-two years old.

The death reshaped her sense of what came next. Melbourne had wanted her to become a school teacher; the English major she was pursuing at Oregon had been chosen with that in mind.

KODL RADIO, THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT, AND MEETING HERB (1940–1941)

By the autumn of 1940, Margaret had returned to The Dalles and was engaged to a man named Jim, the proprietor of the Siberian, a small ice cream shop adjacent to the Granada Theater. The engagement did not survive his temper. After an incident in which he searched her purse and slapped her over a few crumbs of tobacco — she had been trying to quit smoking — her brother Howard met him at the door of the family home with his glasses off, ready to fight.

In October 1940, KODL AM 1230, a new local radio station, began operations in The Dalles, and Margaret took a position as secretary and bookkeeper before they had even gone on the air. She also hosted a small program herself. One of the engineers at the station had come from Freewater, in the Walla Walla Valley fruit country, and kept saying he was going to bring his friend Herb down to take a job at the station. "When you see Herb," he told her, "you'll give that ring back so fast."

Herbert H. Haley arrived in January 1941. He was three months younger than Margaret, the youngest son of Benjamin Thomas Haley of Freewater — an apple and cherry rancher who

had died ten years earlier — and was working as a radio operator. He bought a car so he could drive Margaret home from the station instead of letting her walk; the routes they took grew steadily longer, by way of the canal and the scenic streets, until one day he observed that there was not really room on her hand for two rings. The first engagement ended with both men in her parlor and Margaret in tears in the bathroom; her brother and the brokered standoff between Jim and Herb did not, mercifully, end in violence.

On Sunday, May 10, 1941, in Vancouver, Clark County, Washington, Margaret Ellen Burnett married Herbert H. Haley. The ceremony was performed by John W. Pressly, a Presbyterian clergyman, under a license issued April 28, 1941, by the auditor of Skamania County. The witnesses were George J. Schatz — her brother-in-law, who had married her sister Laura May Burnett two years earlier — and her brother C. H. Burnett. The license affidavits, sworn at the Skamania County courthouse, recorded Herbert as twenty-four, single, occupation "radio operator," birthplace Freewater; Margaret as twenty-four, single, occupation "office clerk," birthplace Peace River, Alberta, Canada — both giving their residence as The Dalles.

RADIO CAREER, THE WAR, AND THE LONG WAY TO CALIFORNIA (1941–1951)

Margaret's daughter Mardi Lynn was born ten months after the wedding, in 1942 — a child whose timing surprised her parents. With Margaret pregnant, the rule against two members of one family working at KODL forced a job change; the station's manager helped her find work as a switchboard operator at the telephone company in Hood River, where she was permitted to work as long as she could still reach the console. Herb soon took an offer at KMED in Medford for thirty-five dollars a week, and the family moved south. They were in Medford only until Mardi was about two months old.

The next move was the one Margaret would remember in 1996 as the high point of her life. A friend of Herb's was hired at KGO in San Francisco — a major-market station — and Herb followed. The young family settled first on the Peninsula at San Carlos, where Herb commuted by train, and later moved into the city proper. Their second daughter, Randi, was born in San Francisco in 1944, while Herb was reading the eleven o'clock news on the radio; the nurses at the hospital, Margaret recalled, were excited to have the news announcer's wife on the ward.

Then came the war. Herb served briefly with the Office of War Information — he was the announcer on the "Weekly War Journal" broadcasts in 1943 — before being repeatedly

classified, deferred, and reclassified by his draft board. Concluding that the next round would land him in the infantry, he enlisted instead with the Merchant Marine as a radio operator. He made several trips on munition ships, and was on his way to Manila when the war ended; he was downwind of both atomic bomb tests in the Pacific, a fact Margaret would later wonder about when he was diagnosed with leukemia. While he was at sea, Margaret took the children to her mother's home in The Dalles.

After the war, the young family returned to San Francisco, but the broadcasting work that had been waiting for Herb in 1942 had passed to other hands. The couple bought a small house in Larkspur, then took an opportunity to buy into a radio station in Ohio with one of Herb's engineering colleagues. They spent five years there — four of them, Margaret recalled, trying to extricate themselves without losing everything. Their third daughter, Melissa Leah, was born in 1950.

By the end of 1951, Herb had a job offer from ABC in Los Angeles. The family drove west and reached California just before Christmas; Herb bought Schwinn bicycles for Mardi and Randi from a motel room, and the move into California was complete. The ABC merger that was supposed to anchor his position fell through the day after Christmas. He found work in the new field of electronics sales, building territories repeatedly only to have them split out from under him each time the income reached two thousand dollars a month.

By her death in 1997, Margaret had lived in California for forty-seven years. The family lived first in Sherman Oaks while saving for a hilltop lot in Woodland Hills; the house there was built around 1957 to Margaret's own design, modeled on plans she had collected by visiting houses for sale, with multiple levels and a hilltop site that gave Herb room to put up his ham radio antennas. They later moved to the home at 6117 Shirley Avenue in Tarzana that would become the address of the Arador kennel.

Herbert H. Haley died in 1970 of leukemia, at the age of fifty-two — the same age at which Margaret's father had died. He was buried at the IOOF Cemetery, The Dalles, in a family plot that would eventually hold both Margaret and her father Melbourne. Margaret would live on at the Shirley Avenue house for another twenty-seven years.

ARADOR KENNEL: MINIATURE SCHNAUZER BREEDER

The dog years began, by Margaret's own account, with an empty afternoon after Mardi married. She had been thinking about getting a miniature schnauzer — partly because two cocker spaniels her sister had given her had each died, partly because the Encyclopedia Britannica entry on dogs included one schnauzer photographed straight on, looking perky, while every other breed was shown in profile. A newspaper advertisement for four miniature schnauzer puppies at $49.95 each, at a pet shop in downtown Woodland Hills, settled it. By the time she got there only one was left. She named him Thorn — short for Arathorn, after the father of Aragorn in J. R. R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings — and the kennel that grew up around him took its name from the same source: Arador.

Thorn himself was over the standard size and could not be shown, but in seeking a groomer for him Margaret made contact with the Miniature Schnauzer Club of Southern California, and the conversation turned to breeding and showing. Friends advised that she would need a professional handler. She decided to learn to handle the dogs herself, on the reasonable theory that handlers had also started somewhere, and that she could read. Over the decades that followed she bred and finished thirty-seven champions — most of them shown by herself — and built a recognized place in the American Miniature Schnauzer Club's national fancy. Dogs from Arador went to France, to Canada, and as far as Rio de Janeiro (where the routing required a stopover in Tampa, since direct shipment would have exceeded the safe transit time). She declined repeated offers from Japanese buyers, by her own slightly rueful telling, out of an unease about how the dogs would be regarded at the other end.

An advertisement preserved in the family records, from a Miniature Schnauzer fancier publication of the 1980s, captures the operation at its peak: a photograph of Gaylynn of Arador going Best of Opposite Sex in Sweepstakes at the AMSC Specialty under breeder-owner handling, and a pedigree chart for Champion Gandalf of Arador. The footer reads: "ARADOR / MARGARET and HERB HALEY / 6117 Shirley Ave., Tarzana, Calif. 91356."

> *The American Miniature Schnauzer Club is the breed's national parent club, sanctioned by the American Kennel Club to host the annual Specialty show — the most prestigious single show on the Miniature Schnauzer calendar. Thirty-seven champions over a kennel's life is a substantial figure, and the practice of breeder-owner handling at the Specialty level placed Margaret among the more committed amateurs of the fancy.*

Her California death certificate records her occupation as "Dog Breeder," her kind of business as "Dog Breeding," and her years in occupation as thirty-five. The breeding life had given her a purpose after her children were grown and a focus to which she returned daily for the rest of her working years.

DEATH: APRIL 6, 1997

Margaret Burnett Haley died on Sunday, April 6, 1997, at the Tarzana Rehab Center in Tarzana, California. She was seventy-nine years old. The State of California Certificate of Death records the immediate cause of death as cardiac arrest, due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, due to atherosclerosis. The informant on the certificate was her daughter Randi Decious, of San Jose. Her usual residence was given as 6117 Shirley Avenue, Tarzana — the home where she had bred her schnauzers, and finished out her life.

She had recorded an oral history at her home in November 1996, four months before her death. It was intended as the first of two sessions; the second never took place. The recording, when it ends, leaves much of the second half of her life — the daughters' marriages and children, Herbert's leukemia and death in 1970, the long widowhood she sustained on the strength of the kennel — still in the realm of family memory rather than transcribed record.

Her remains were interred at the IOOF Cemetery in The Dalles, Oregon, in the family plot alongside her husband Herbert and her father Melbourne. The brief obituary that ran in the Los Angeles area read: "MARGARET BURNETT HALEY — Loving mother of Mardi Briggs, Randi Decious, and Melissa Crofoot; daughter of Daisy Piercey; grandmother of seven; great-grandmother of eleven; and sister of two."

> *The obituary's reference to Margaret as "daughter of Daisy Piercey" is a small, poignant detail. Daisy May Propst Burnett Manning Piercey — Margaret's mother — was still living at the time, and would survive her eldest daughter by just over two months. Daisy died on June 20, 1997, at age ninety-nine. The phrase "sister of two" refers to Margaret's siblings Claude Howard Burnett (1919–1999) and Laura May Burnett Schatz (1920–2016), both of whom also outlived her.*

SUMMARY

Margaret Ellen Burnett Haley was the eldest surviving child of two telegraph operators who had courted each other across the wires of the Alberta provincial line, and she was born into the Peace River frontier in the dead of an Alberta winter. She came to Oregon as an infant

when her parents resettled in the Columbia River country, grew up in the Union Pacific railway depot at Biggs without electricity or a telephone, and went away to the University of Oregon, where she pledged Alpha Delta Pi, joined the women's small-bore rifle team, served on the sophomore dance committee, and earned a junior certificate with honors privileges. Her father's death from coronary thrombosis on a homecoming-weekend train in 1937 changed the trajectory of her education and lifted the obligation to teach school that he had laid on her.

She broke off a first engagement to a man who had slapped her over a crumb of tobacco, took a job at the new KODL radio station in The Dalles in October 1940, and there met Herbert H. Haley — a radio man and the youngest son of Benjamin Thomas Haley of Freewater. They married in May 1941, raised three daughters across a decade of moves through Hood River, Medford, San Francisco, the Office of War Information, the Merchant Marine, postwar Larkspur, a five-year stretch in Ohio, and finally California in late 1951. They built a hilltop house in Woodland Hills to her own design, and eventually moved to the Tarzana home that became the headquarters of Arador, the Miniature Schnauzer kennel that bore her imprint for the remainder of her life and finished thirty-seven champions in the American show ring.

Herbert died of leukemia at fifty-two in 1970 — the same age at which her father had died — and Margaret continued the kennel and the household for another twenty-seven years. She died at seventy-nine, two months before her ninety-nine-year-old mother, leaving three daughters, seven grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren, and an oral history recorded four months before the end.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Margaret Burnett Haley, State of California, Department of Health Services; State File No. 3-051997-086872; Local Registration No. 3-1997-19-015875; principal cause: cardiac arrest, due to COPD, due to atherosclerosis; informant: Randi Decious, daughter; filed April 10, 1997.

Certificate of Registration of Birth — Margaret Ellen Burnett, Province of Alberta, Registration District of Peace River; date of birth January 2, 1918; registered January 23, 1918; A. E. Carlisle, Registrar.

Alberta Certificate of Birth — Margaret Ellen Burnett, Alberta Social Services and Community Health, Vital Statistics; Record No. 18-08-002906; certified extract issued July 7, 1981.

Certificate of Marriage No. 8849 — Herbert Haley and Margaret E. Burnett, State of Washington, County of Clark; license issued April 28, 1941, Skamania County; ceremony May 10, 1941, Vancouver, Washington; officiant John W. Pressly, Presbyterian clergyman; witnesses Geo. J. Schatz and C. H. Burnett.

Manifest, Port of Vancouver, B.C. — Burnett, Margaret, age 10, daughter, accompanied by father Melbourne L., born Peace River, Alberta; September 8, 1928; serial No. 8-64.

Immigrant Identification Card, U.S. Department of Labor — Margaret Ellen Burnett; date of birth January 2, 1918; country of birth Canada; visa No. 564, Section 4(c); American Consulate at Vancouver, B.C., September 8, 1928; bearing signature "Margaret Burnett."

Newspaper Sources

The Edmonton Bulletin (Edmonton, Alberta) • 7 Jan 1918 (birth notice)

Peace River Record (Peace River, Alberta) • 18 Jan 1918 • 25 Jan 1918

Albany Democrat (Albany, Oregon) • 1 Nov 1923 (Knox Butte gathering, Burnett family of Biggs present)

The Register-Guard (Eugene, Oregon) • 29 Mar 1936 (sorority pledges) • 11 Feb 1938 (women's rifle team) • 24 Sep 1938 (78 students earn honor ratings)

The Sunday Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) • 28 Jun 1936 (student recognition list) • 15 Nov 1936 (sophomore dance committee)

The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) • 10 Feb 1938 ('Webfoot Co-eds Bill Rifle Shoot With Washington') • Jun 1997 (obituary, Daisy M. Burnett Piercey)

The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, Oregon) • 31 Oct 1937 (obituary, M. L. Burnett) • 5 Mar 1939 (Laura May Burnett wedding, Margaret as maid of honor)

Family and Genealogical Sources

Letter — Melbourne L. Burnett to Daisy Burnett, "Home," January 2, 1918 (transcribed from family papers); written the day Margaret was born.

Oral History — Margaret Haley, recorded November 24, 1996, at the Shirley Avenue home, Tarzana, California; transcribed for family records (family collection); covers childhood through the early 1960s; planned second session not completed before her death April 6, 1997.

Headstone — IOOF Cemetery, The Dalles, Wasco County, Oregon; family plot containing Melbourne L. Burnett (1885–1937), Margaret Ellen Burnett Haley (1918–1997), and Herbert H. Haley (1918–1970).

Arador Kennel advertisement — Miniature Schnauzer fancier publication, c. 1980s; "Gaylynn of Arador" and pedigree of "Ch. Gandalf of Arador"; Margaret and Herb Haley, 6117 Shirley Avenue, Tarzana, California (family collection).

Margaret Burnett Haley obituary notice — Forest Lawn Mortuary, Hollywood Hills; private services notice (family collection).

BENJAMIN THOMAS HALEY

Oklahoma Pioneer • Farmer • Fruit Rancher

VIRGINIA • OKLAHOMA TERRITORY • OREGON

Also known as: B. T. Haley • Thomas Haley • Tom Haley

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	14 May 1876, Wallace, Washington County, Virginia
DIED	13 November 1931, Freewater, Umatilla County, Oregon (age 55)
BURIAL	Mountain View Mausoleum, Walla Walla, Washington
FATHER	Benjamin Franklin Haley (1834–1895)
MOTHER	Harriett Catherine Birdwell (1848–1921)
FIRST MARRIAGE	1 March 1897, Washington County, Virginia, to M. Kate (Katie) Whicker (1875–1928)
SECOND MARRIAGE	1929, Milton, Oregon, to Mrs. Myrtle Foltz (who survived him; listed as "Myrtle Haley" on death certificate)
CHILDREN	Mary Alberta Haley (1897–1952) Benjamin Thomas, Haley Jr. (1902–1971) Theodore Roosevelt Haley (1907–1974) Naomi Kathleen Haley (1909–1984) Ruth Azalea Haley (1911–1965) Billie Estelle Haley (1915–1995) Herbert H. Haley (1918–1970)
SIBLINGS	Mary Elizabeth Haley (1868–1936) William Henry Haley (1884–1952) Veril Haley (1885–1886)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Benjamin Thomas (B. T.) Haley was born on 14 May 1876 in Wallace, Washington County, Virginia, the son of Benjamin Franklin (B. F.) Haley and Harriett (Hattie) Birdwell, both Virginia-born. Washington County sits in the far southwest of the state, where the Appalachian ridges press close to the Tennessee border. The Haleys were landholding farm

people in the late 1800s, and young Benjamin grew up in the same world that shaped many of the families he would spend his life among.

Benjamin had one brother: William Henry (W. H.) Haley, later of Pasco, Washington, who also farmed and appears repeatedly in the same social columns of the Olustee press. A sister, Mary Elizabeth Haley (Sharrett), remained near Bristol, Virginia.

> *These siblings are confirmed through the 1921 obituary of their mother, Hattie (Birdwell) McCoy (Bristol Herald Courier, 9 May 1921), which lists B. T. Haley of Freewater, Oregon, W. H. Haley of Pasco, Washington, and Mrs. Robert W. Sharrett of near Bristol as her surviving children. Their mother had been previously married to a Benjamin Franklin Haley (d. 1895), then to Francis McCoy (d. 1916). Note: the alternate spelling "Hailey" included in newspaper articles vs. "Haley" used by B. T. throughout his life.*

MARRIAGE AND EARLY LIFE IN VIRGINIA (1897)

On 1 March 1897, Benjamin Thomas Haley, aged twenty-one, married Maria Catherine (Kate) Whicker — aged twenty-two — in Washington County, Virginia. The ceremony was performed by M. L. Clendenin and is recorded in the county Marriage Register at Book 1, Page 231. A certified copy of the record, issued in March 1974, gives her name as 'Katie Whicker'.

The Haley and Whicker families were neighbors in Washington County, and the marriage kept the young couple rooted in the community they knew. They would not stay rooted for long. B. T. Haley was a man who moved — toward better land, better prospects, better country — and the first major move came almost immediately.

OKLAHOMA TERRITORY: FARMING AT GREER COUNTY (C.1900–1910)

By the early 1900s the Haleys had settled near Olustee in Greer County, Oklahoma Territory, farming their own land and putting down roots in a community that would hold them for the better part of a decade. The Olustee Outlook and the Olustee Democrat tracked their comings and goings with the warmth that small-town papers reserved for people who mattered locally.

In November 1904 the Outlook noted that B. T. Haley and family were leaving for their old home at Bristol, Virginia — he still owned his farm near town and had rented it out for the year, and he was heading east to work as an organizer for the Modern Woodmen of America.

It was the kind of errand that suited a sociable man: the Modern Woodmen was a fraternal benefit society offering life insurance and fellowship to farm families across the plains, and recruiting new members required the ability to walk into a community and be trusted. Haley clearly had that quality.

> *The Modern Woodmen of America, founded in 1883, was one of the largest fraternal benefit organizations in the country by the early 1900s, with a particularly strong base in the Midwest and Great Plains. The role of organizer was essentially that of a travelling salesman for mutual aid — part sales, part community building. Haley would remain associated with the organization for the rest of his life, eventually serving as a manager of the Milton chapter in Oregon in 1926.*

He was back in Oklahoma by April 1905, much sooner than planned. The Outlook reported that he had surprised his many friends by returning with his family from Virginia after only a few months, having set out with the intention of remaining away at least a year. Both he and Kate expressed themselves, the paper noted, as being glad to get back to Greer. Whatever Virginia offered, Oklahoma had become home.

The picture that emerges from the Olustee papers of the middle 1900s is of a man at ease in his community and in his life. In August 1905, when Mrs. Haley travelled to Mangum for the teachers' institute, the paper noted that B. T. 'looks quite lonesome during her absence' — a detail small enough to be genuine. In July 1907, the Outlook was exuberant: 'Tom Haley is the happiest man you ever saw. He has a big new boy at his house. You can hear Tom singing all over the whole country when he goes out of a morning to work.' It is the kind of observation that only gets into a newspaper because everyone in town already knows it is true.

He was also taking on the civic responsibilities that went with being a settled member of a community. In January 1908 he was appointed school trustee, filling vacancies left by men who had moved away. In March of the same year, Contractor Bratton was finishing an eight-room house for Tom Haley south of the city — a substantial structure for a farming family, and a sign that he was building for permanence. The social notes of late 1907 and early 1908 show a steady traffic of Whicker and Williams and McCoy families visiting and being visited — the same extended network of Washington County, Virginia families that had relocated together to southwestern Oklahoma.

> *The Whicker family that appears most prominently in these social columns — G. W. Whicker and family, Z. B. Whicker and family, Smith Whicker — are the children and family of the Rev. George Washington Whicker, who died on New Year's Day 1908. A social note from December*

> *1907 records G. W. Whicker and family spending a Sunday with B. T. Haley and family — one of the last such notes before the elder Whicker's death. The connections between the Haley and Whicker families in Oklahoma run throughout this period.*

DEPARTURE FOR OREGON (1910)

In October 1910, B. T. Haley and family arrived in Salem, Oregon, having come from Olustee by way of Ft. Worth, Denver, and the Northern Pacific Railway. The Capital Journal noted their arrival: a farmer and hog raiser from Oklahoma who said that many families would follow him if he found a good place to settle. He had been hearing about Oregon, he would later write, for about four years before he finally made the trip.

The letter he sent back to the Olustee Democrat in January 1911 — written from Thomas, Oregon, in December 1910, and published under the headline 'Haley Writes About Trip to Oregon' — is the fullest record of B.T.'s voice that survives. He describes the journey across the plains at night, unable to see the country in the dark; the Rockies at daybreak, with three engines pulling the train and one holding back as they descended; the canyon country of Montana, so close and horrible-looking from the train window that it seemed the trains might break loose and fall. He describes the hop fields and the fruit orchards of the Willamette Valley, the apple trees full of the nicest apples he had ever seen, the Ben Davis orchards of the neighbors, and his own astonishment at a twig of Baldwins from T. B. Montgomery's orchard that had ten big apples on it. He had been raised in Virginia, he wrote, and had never seen apple trees so full of such nice apples before.

He was right that others would follow. The movement of Oklahoma families into the Willamette Valley and the Columbia Plateau was part of a broader westward drift of plains settlers in the early twentieth century, and Haley was among its advance scouts. He spent the next few years in what looks, from the surviving records, like a period of testing — prospecting in the Willamette Valley around Thomas and Lebanon, returning to Oklahoma, then coming back to Oregon for good.

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS (1911–1917)

The early 1910s found the Haley family moving between Oklahoma and Oregon in a way that suggests both genuine attachment to the new country and unfinished business in the old one. In December 1912, the Albany Democrat reported that B. T. Haley had sold a farm and

expected to winter in Lebanon, Oregon, before returning to Oklahoma in the spring, where he still owned a large acreage. By August 1913, the Olustee Democrat was welcoming the family back after 'a long stay in Oregon,' observing with dry warmth that they looked like they had had enough to eat since they left — and hoping they would get enough to eat in Oklahoma too.

In April 1915, a daughter (Billie Estelle) was born to Mr. and Mrs. B. T. Haley on 29 March — a fine twelve-pound girl, the Olustee Democrat reported. It was among the last notices placing the family firmly in Oklahoma. In March 1917 they were still there, celebrating their twentieth wedding anniversary with an afternoon of singing, music, and conversation, entertaining the Brodie, Williams, Whicker, Leonard, Warren, Felty, Copenhaver, and Dickey families — a gathering that read like a directory of their entire social world. But within months they were gone. In 1917, B. T. Haley and family made their final and permanent move, purchasing property near Freewater, Oregon, and closing the Oklahoma chapter of their lives for good.

> *The 1917 anniversary party is notable for what it implies about timing. The Haleys were clearly saying goodbye — gathering their extended community of neighbors and kinspeople one last time before departure — though the papers do not frame it that way. The Olustee period had lasted roughly sixteen years, long enough for genuine roots, and the farewell was evidently a full one.*

FREEWATER, OREGON: FRUIT RANCHING (1917–1931)

The Haleys purchased a ten-acre fruit tract about two miles north of Freewater, Umatilla County, Oregon, on the line of the interurban railway between Walla Walla and Milton. They named it Cherry Grove farm. In a letter written to the Lebanon Express in early 1918, B. T. Haley described the new place with evident satisfaction: free water rights from the Little Walla Walla River, free delivery of groceries, electric lights, their own cows and hogs and chickens, and surrounding wheat and alfalfa fields dotted with fruit and garden tracts. The winter so far had been ideal, he wrote — not much snow, no wind to speak of. He invited his Willamette Valley friends to come and see them if they were ever up that part of the country.

He threw himself into the farm with the same energy he had brought to Oklahoma. By November 1921, the Oregon Daily Journal was covering the Freewater apple crop and named Haley as one of the district's notable growers: 1½ acres set in apple trees, 5,185 boxes marketed that season of Rome Beauty, Winesap, Jonathan, and Newton varieties. The East Oregonian

in June 1924 identified him as the owner of Cherry Grove farm and quoted him directly, passing through Pendleton en route to Newport for a vacation: his cherries had been about a third of a crop that year, apples about the same, but prices were better and the fruit would pay him well even with the short yield. He also kept a flock of two hundred hens and milked two or three cows.

In the April 1920 letter to his old Altus Times-Democrat (Oklahoma), Haley enumerated his situation with the candor of a man writing to people who would understand every detail: six to seven thousand dollars gross from the ranch the previous year, not counting expenses which were rather high; a full bathroom just being installed at a cost of nearly eight hundred dollars — expensive, he allowed, but a necessary convenience for the family. Fifteen to twenty bushels of apples still on hand, cherries just about to blossom, a new six-hundred-dollar spraying rig that one man could operate as fast as two men could walk. And a phonograph, which he mentioned almost as an afterthought: a three-hundred-dollar Widdicomb phonograph, which could make music that almost made one's hair stand on end, though it happened to be on a phonograph.

> *The Walla Walla Valley straddling the Oregon-Washington border was one of the Pacific Northwest's developing apple and soft-fruit districts in the early decades of the twentieth century, attracting settlers with agricultural backgrounds who could recognize good orchard country. Haley arrived early enough in Freewater's development to establish himself before the district was fully settled, and his letters back to Oklahoma — practical, enthusiastic, honest about costs and yields — were the kind of first-hand reporting that shaped where other settlers chose to go.*

Beyond the farm, Haley continued the civic and fraternal life he had maintained since Virginia. In December 1926 he was elected a manager of the Milton Modern Woodmen chapter, a position that connected his Oregon life back to the same organization he had organized for in Oklahoma in 1904. By October 1928 he was among the Milton-Freewater Masons attending the district meeting in Pendleton in honor of the Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge of Oregon — a man of standing in his community, a joiner and a presence. When former Oklahoma neighbors visited the Willamette Valley in 1926 and 1931, it was the Haley home in Freewater they came to see, and the paper noted that the Nichols and Haley families had been friends and neighbors on homestead claims in Oklahoma many years ago.

The family also kept its connections to the wider world. In July 1921, B. T., Kate, and their children toured the valley in a large Paige car — the 1919 Paige known as "The Most Beautiful

Car in America," marketed as a luxury alternative to more common models like the Ford Model T — visiting old friends in Lebanon and planning to continue to Eugene, Salem, and Seaside. In June 1929, they were passing through the Scio and Lebanon areas again, their daughter Naomi having been attending the state normal school at Monmouth.

DEATH OF KATE HALEY AND REMARRIAGE (1928–1929)

Kate Whicker Haley, who had been at her husband's side since their marriage in Virginia in 1897, died in 1928. The Altus Times-Democrat (Oklahoma) ran an obituary notice. The paper added that she had visited Olustee in July, and had not been feeling well at the time. She and B. T. had been married for thirty-one years.

In 1929, B. T. Haley married Mrs. Myrtle Foltz of Milton, Oregon. She is listed as "Myrtle Haley" on his death certificate and is described in both obituary notices as surviving him.

DECLINE AND DEATH (1931)

By March 1931, the East Oregonian reported that B. T. had been hospitalized in critical condition. Though he was once known for his booming voice, often heard singing across the countryside as he set out for morning work, a year of chronic illness had left him frail. After several hospitalizations over the previous months, his health was failing.

He died at his home north of Freewater on Friday afternoon, 13 November 1931, at approximately ten minutes past six. He was fifty-five years old. Dr. Elmer Hill of Walla Walla, who had attended him from 1 March 1931 onward, recorded the cause of death as acute myocarditis, with nephritis, high blood pressure, and ascites as contributing factors. A surgical procedure — an omentopoexy — had been performed on 1 November, apparently without success.

Funeral services were held on Monday afternoon, 17 November, at the Freewater Federated Church. The Masons had charge of the burial at the Mountain View Mausoleum in Walla Walla, Washington. Two obituaries ran the same day — the East Oregonian and the Spokesman-Review — and a third appeared in the Oregon Daily Journal. They agree on the essentials: born at Wallace, Virginia, married in 1897, settled in Olustee until 1917, then Freewater. The East Oregonian adds that he had been a resident since 1917, 'having come here from Oklahoma.'

> *The death certificate records his marital status as 'Married' and lists Myrtle Haley of Freewater as the informant — his second wife, who had known him for only two years. The biographical details on the certificate are accordingly sparse, and the father's name is recorded simply as 'Benjamin Haley' without a middle name or fuller identification.*

SUMMARY

Benjamin Thomas Haley was a Virginia-born farm boy who spent his life moving west and making things grow. He organized fraternal lodges in the mountains of southwestern Virginia, farmed the Oklahoma plains for fifteen years, ranched apples and cherries in the Walla Walla Valley fruit district, and served as school trustee, Mason, and Modern Woodmen officer along the way. He arrived at each new place with practical intelligence and an obvious willingness to put in the work, and the evidence — the five-thousand-dollar Oklahoma farm, the five-thousand boxes of Oregon apples, the two-hundred hens, the six-hundred-dollar spraying rig — suggests he generally succeeded.

What distinguishes him in the historical record is not the farm ledger but the letters he sent back to his old papers. The 1911 letter to the Olustee Democrat — with its account of three engines hauling the train over the Rockies, its careful description of the Ben Davis orchards and the twig of Baldwins with ten apples on it, its open-hearted invitation for Oklahoma families to follow him west — is the voice of a man who was genuinely interested in the world and wanted to share what he found in it. The 1920 letter to the Altus Times-Democrat, with its bathroom costs and spraying rigs and the Widdicomb phonograph that made music to raise the hair on your head, is the same voice, a decade older and thoroughly settled in its new country.

He died at fifty-five, which was too young. But the Olustee Outlook caught something essential about him in July 1907, when it reported that you could hear Tom Haley singing all over the whole country when he went out of a morning to work. That image — a man singing as he goes out to the fields — is not a bad thing to leave behind.

His connection to the Whicker family, well-documented through the Oklahoma social columns and the intermarriage of the two families, places him directly within the network of interconnected Washington County, Virginia families that is the subject of this broader genealogical research.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Benjamin Thomas Haley, State of Oregon, Umatilla County; State File No. 223; principal cause: acute myocarditis; signed Dr. Elmer Hill, Walla Walla, Wash.; 13 November 1931.

Marriage Certificate (certified copy) — Benj. T. Haley and Katie Whicker, Washington County, Virginia, 1 March 1897; certified 8 March 1974; Marriage Register No. 1, Page 231.

Draft Registration Card — Benjamin Thomas Haley, Freewater, Oregon; occupation: agriculture/stock raising; nearest relative: Maria C. Haley; c.1918.

Newspaper Sources

The Olustee Outlook (Olustee, Oklahoma) • 24 Nov 1904 • 20 Apr 1905 • 3 Aug 1905 • 5 Jul 1907 • 27 Dec 1907 • 30 Jan 1908 (two items) • 16 Apr 1908 • 23 Apr 1908

The Olustee Democrat (Olustee, Oklahoma) • 12 Mar 1908 • 5 Jan 1911 • 21 Aug 1913 • 1 Apr 1915 • 8 Mar 1917

The Capital Journal (Salem, Oregon) • 13 Oct 1910 • 10 Jul 1926 • 15 Jul 1926

The Lebanon Express (Lebanon, Oregon) • 13 Mar 1918 • 20 Jul 1921 • 12 Jun 1929

The Altus Times-Democrat (Altus, Oklahoma) • 29 Apr 1920 • 28 Aug 1928

Albany Democrat / Albany Democrat-Herald (Albany, Oregon) • 20 Dec 1912 • 21 Jun 1929

The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, Oregon) • 7 Nov 1921 • 17 Nov 1931

East Oregonian (Pendleton, Oregon) • 28 Jun 1924 • 18 Oct 1928 • 21 Mar 1931 • 17 Nov 1931

The Spokesman-Review (Spokane, Washington) • 14 Dec 1926 • 17 Nov 1931

Statesman Journal (Salem, Oregon) • 12 Aug 1931

Bristol Herald Courier (Bristol, Virginia) • 9 May 1921 (obituary of Mrs. Hattie [Birdwell] McCoy, mother of B. T. Haley) • 15 May 1921

MARIA CATHERINE WHICKER

Oklahoma Pioneer • Schoolteacher • Farm Wife

VIRGINIA · OKLAHOMA TERRITORY · OREGON

Also known as: Kate Whicker • Katie Whicker • Maria Haley • Kate Haley • Mrs. B. T. Haley • Mrs. Tom Haley • M. Kate Wicker (in obit.)

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	April 27, 1874, Washington County, Virginia
DIED	August 25, 1928, St. Mary's Hospital, Walla Walla, Washington (age 54)
BURIAL	Mountain View Mausoleum, Walla Walla, Washington
FATHER	George Washington Whicker (1843–1908)
MOTHER	Emma C. Fleenor (1846–1912)
MARRIED	March 1, 1897, Washington County, Virginia, to Benjamin Thomas Haley (1876–1931)
CHILDREN	Mary Alberta Haley (1897–1952) Benjamin Thomas, Haley Jr. (1902–1971) Theodore Roosevelt Haley (1907–1974) Naomi Kathleen Haley (1909–1984) Ruth Azalea Haley (1911–1965) Billie Estelle Haley (1915–1995) Herbert H. Haley (1918–1970)
SIBLINGS	Joseph Teeter Whicker (1866–1918) Martha Frances Whicker (1868–1947) Mary Virginia Whicker (1870–1963) Lula Estelle Whicker (1873–1932) George Smith Whicker (1876–1954) Zachariah Benjamin Whicker (1878–1924) Nannie Belle Whicker (1881–1967) William Thomas Whicker (1883–1883) Minnie Orlena Whicker (1884–1960) Henry Walker Whicker (1886–1953) Myrtle May Whicker (1890–1972)

> *Note on name variants: Newspaper sources from Oklahoma and Oregon use "Kate Haley," "Mrs. B. T. Haley," and "Mrs. Tom Haley" interchangeably. The 1897 Virginia marriage register gives her name as "Katie Whicker." The fuller form "Maria Catherine" is preserved in family genealogical records and is consistent with her father's note of a daughter "Maria C." born in 1874 in his own family record.*

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Maria Catherine Whicker — known throughout her adult life as Kate — was born on April 27, 1874, in Washington County, Virginia, the fifth of twelve children of the Reverend George Washington Whicker and Emma C. Fleenor. The Whicker household was tobacco-farming country shaped by the rhythms of the agricultural year and the social gravity of Protestant church life, and Kate grew up in the world of southwestern Virginia's mountain borderland between Tennessee and the Blue Ridge mountains.

Her father, the Rev. G. W. Whicker, was a working farmer, Sabbath School superintendent, and ordained minister who would convert from the Methodists to the Baptists in the early 1890s and build a regional reputation as a revival preacher. The family's life was structured around the church calendar, the tobacco auction at Bristol, and the wide network of Whicker, Fleenor, Leonard, and related families that formed the social fabric of Washington County. Kate had ten surviving siblings, several of whom — Smith, Zachariah (Zack), Nannie, Henry (H. W.), and Walker — would later appear in the Olustee, Oklahoma social columns alongside her own family.

> *Washington County, Virginia, in the late nineteenth century produced a pattern of westward emigration to Oklahoma Territory after its opening to settlement in 1889. The Whickers, Haleys, Williamses, Leonards, and Brodies were among the interconnected Virginia families who relocated together to the Olustee–Greer County area in the late 1890s. Kate's marriage in 1897 took place at the very end of her family's Virginia chapter — within a year, her father had moved the family to Oklahoma Territory.*

MARRIAGE AND THE MOVE TO OKLAHOMA (1897–1899)

On March 1, 1897, Maria Catherine "Katie" Whicker, aged twenty-two, married Benjamin Thomas Haley, aged twenty-one, in Washington County, Virginia. The ceremony was performed by M. L. Clendenin and is recorded in the county Marriage Register at Book 1, Page 231. A certified copy issued in March 1974 gives her name as "Katie Whicker." The Haley and

Whicker families had been neighbors in Washington County for years, and the marriage cemented a bond between two families whose lives would remain interwoven for the next three decades.

Their first child, Mary Alberta, was born later that same year. By February 1899, Kate and B. T. had joined the broader migration of Washington County families to Greer County, Oklahoma Territory — at that time still considered part of Texas, contested between the two jurisdictions. A surviving deed dated February 14, 1899, records B. T. and Kate Haley jointly conveying a fifty-acre tract of Virginia land — about one mile west of Wallace, in Washington County — to R. W. Sharrett, trustee for the benefit of Harriett C. (Birdwell) McCoy (B. T.'s mother, by then remarried). The deed was executed before a notary in Greer County, Oklahoma Territory, on February 21, 1899, and recorded in Washington County, Virginia, in June 1900. Kate's signature on the document, alongside her husband's, places her firmly in Greer County by early 1899.

> *The 1899 deed is significant for several reasons. It places the Haleys in Oklahoma Territory by February of that year — within roughly two years of their marriage — and confirms that Kate had property rights in Virginia that required her formal participation in the conveyance. The arrangement, in which the proceeds went to B. T.'s widowed mother through a trustee, was a common device for providing for elderly parents through the distribution of legacy land. The transaction also shows Kate's father-in-law's estate (B. F. Haley, d. 1895) being progressively wound up four years after his death.*

OLUSTEE, OKLAHOMA TERRITORY: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY (1899–1917)

For the better part of two decades, Kate Haley made her home near Olustee in Greer County, Oklahoma Territory (which became part of the State of Oklahoma at statehood in 1907). The Olustee Outlook and Olustee Democrat tracked her presence in the community with the warmth small-town papers reserved for women who mattered locally — sometimes by name, often as "Mrs. B. T. Haley" or simply as the wife who had gone to town with Tom on Wednesday.

Her father, the Reverend G. W. Whicker, had himself settled at Willow Vale, three miles south of Olustee, around 1898, and the broader Whicker clan formed the nucleus of Kate's extended family in Oklahoma. The social columns of the period are full of moments that capture Kate at the center of that network: the December 1907 Sunday on which her parents and family

spent the day with the Haleys; her parents' presence at the Haley home through the early 1900s; the moves between her father's farm at Willow Vale and her own home south of Olustee. When her father died on New Year's Day 1908, Kate was among the family at his bedside.

She was, by independent profession, a schoolteacher. A July 1906 notice in the Olustee Outlook recorded that "Mrs. Kate Haley is teaching school at Cottonwood" — a small community in the surrounding farming district — and that "the people of Cottonwood are to be congratulated on securing her service as a teacher as a better one would be hard to find." The Outlook came back to the same point the following month: in August 1905 it had noted that Mrs. B. T. Haley was attending the teachers' institute at Mangum, the Greer County seat, while "B. T. looks quite lonesome during her absence." Teaching school was a serious vocation for Kate, not a casual occupation, and one she would eventually carry into the years after her husband's various trips and her own absences from the farm.

> *Married women teachers were a documented but not universal feature of frontier and rural school systems in the early 1900s. In Oklahoma Territory and the early state, the demand for qualified instructors in scattered rural schools often outweighed the social preference, common in larger urban districts, that married women retire from teaching. Kate's continued professional work after her marriage and motherhood places her among the more independent women of her community.*

Kate also took on roles in the women's fraternal life of the district. The May 1914 Olustee Democrat listed her as Recorder of the local Camp of the Royal Neighbors of America — the women's auxiliary of the Modern Woodmen of America, the same fraternal benefit society that her husband had organized for. The Recorder's role involved keeping the lodge minutes and managing membership records, a task that drew on her teaching background and made her, in effect, the institutional memory of the local chapter. She was the Recorder from 1914 until they made the final move to Oregon in 1917.

The years between 1897 and 1917 brought seven children. Mary Alberta arrived in Virginia at the very beginning of the marriage, before the move; the rest were born in Oklahoma. The Olustee Democrat for April 1, 1915 carried a notice of typical small-town brevity: "A fine, 12 pound girl was born to Mr. and Mrs. B. T. Haley, Monday March 29." The child was Billie Estelle. By the time the youngest, Herbert, arrived in 1918, the family had relocated to Oregon, and Billie's birth in 1915 stands as one of the last of the Olustee notices.

There were also moments of departure and return. In November 1904 the Outlook reported that B. T. Haley and family were leaving for Bristol, Virginia — he was working as an organizer for the Modern Woodmen — and were expected to be away at least a year. They were back by April 1905, much sooner than planned, and the paper noted that both Kate and B. T. "expressed themselves as being glad to get back to Greer." In October 1910, B. T. made an extended scouting trip to Oregon; Kate and the children remained behind, and a series of letters and visits over the following years reflected the family's gradual decision-making about whether and where to relocate.

March 1917 brought a milestone: the Haleys celebrated their twentieth wedding anniversary at home, entertaining the Brodie, Williams, Whicker, Leonard, Warren, Felty, Copenhaver, and Dickey families with an afternoon of singing, music, and conversation. The party functioned, in retrospect, as a farewell — within months the Haleys had decided to leave Oklahoma for good. In November 1917, the Olustee Democrat captured the departure under the headline "A Family Reunion": before leaving, B. T. and Kate had been given a "home gathering" at the Billy Williams home after the Sunday morning church service. Some four score relatives and neighbors attended, including Mr. and Mrs. Smith Whicker, Mr. and Mrs. Zack Whicker, the Leonards, Williamses, Warrens, Feltys, Brodies, Copenhavers, Wheelers, and many others. The dinner was "Hooverized" — a contemporary nod to the wartime food conservation drives — "but plentiful and marked a pleasant hour." The closing line of the report struck a wistful note: "We then disbanded, hoping to all meet again when Tom and Kate return to Oklahoma."

> *Hoover food conservation — pledging to economize on wheat, meat, sugar, and fats — was a major civilian effort during the United States' participation in the First World War, organized under Herbert Hoover as Food Administrator. A "Hooverized" dinner in November 1917 placed the Haley farewell squarely within the wartime moment. The hope expressed in the report — that the family would return to Oklahoma — was not borne out; their move to Oregon proved permanent.*

FREEWATER, OREGON: CHERRY GROVE FARM (1917–1928)

The Haleys purchased a ten-acre fruit tract about two miles north of Freewater, Umatilla County, Oregon, in 1917, naming the place Cherry Grove farm. It sat on the line of the interurban railway between Walla Walla and Milton, with free water rights from the Little Walla Walla River, electric lights, and surrounding fields of wheat and alfalfa dotted with fruit and

garden tracts. Kate took up the running of the household on a working orchard, sharing in the management of cherries, apples, prunes, two hundred laying hens, and two or three milk cows. By 1924, the East Oregonian was identifying B. T. as the owner of Cherry Grove farm — a designation that, in the small-town way of such things, meant Kate as much as it meant her husband.

She kept up an active life in Oregon women's organizations. In April 1911, while the family was still in Oklahoma but Kate was apparently visiting Oregon, the East Oregonian reported that she had assisted Mrs. Rose McGrath, state organizer for the Royal Neighbors of America, in instituting Rose Camp of the R.N.A. at Banks, Oregon — bringing her Oklahoma R.N.A. experience to bear in helping organize a new Oregon chapter.

After the family settled at Freewater, Kate became active in the Ladies' Aid Society of the Freewater Federated Church. The January 1922 Oregon Daily Journal recorded that the Ladies' Aid had elected its slate of officers for the coming year, with Mrs. A. C. Denny as president and Kate as vice president. She was returned to the same office a year later: the December 1922 Journal noted that the new officers, elected at a meeting at the manse, included "Mrs. A. C. Denny, president; Mrs. B. T. Haley, vice president." In February 1923, the Spokesman-Review's coverage of a "silver tea" hosted by the Aid Society for Washington's Birthday placed Kate among the prize-winners of the afternoon's blindfolded "cut down the cherry tree" contest. The detail is small, but it gives a clear glimpse of a settled, sociable woman entirely at ease in her adopted community.

Connections to their early stays in Western Oregon (while living primarily in Oklahoma) remained warm through these years. In July 1926, the Haleys returned with two of their children — likely Billy and Herbert — to visit old friends at Salem, Eugene, and Scio in the Willamette Valley. The Capital Journal of July 15th headlined "Former Oklahomans Gather for Picnic" and named Kate and B. T. as honor guests at a gathering of forty-two former Oklahoma residents in Woodland Park, Bethel; the Statesman Journal a day later confirmed the same picnic. The Lebanon Express noted them as guests of Mr. and Mrs. Reiley over the same weekend, and the Capital Journal placed them at Rickey, visiting Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Nichols — old neighbors from homestead claim days in Oklahoma.

> *The Walla Walla Valley straddling the Oregon–Washington border was one of the Pacific Northwest's developing apple and soft-fruit districts in the early decades of the twentieth century, attracting settlers with agricultural backgrounds. The Federated Church at Freewater, in which*

> *Kate served as Ladies' Aid vice president, was a union congregation drawing in members from multiple Protestant traditions — a not-uncommon arrangement in small Western towns where no single denomination could sustain a separate congregation.*

DEATH: AUGUST 25, 1928

Kate Haley's final illness came on quickly. She had visited Olustee, Eldorado, and Duke, Oklahoma in July 1928, and her family there later told the Altus Times-Democrat that "at that time was not feeling very well." Her physician, Dr. S. K. Whitacre of Walla Walla, attended her from August 13th onward; the disease was diagnosed as typhoid fever, contracted, in Oklahoma. The duration of the illness was forty days, the certificate recorded, with intestinal hemorrhage as a secondary cause and exhaustion as a contributory factor.

She died at St. Mary's Hospital in Walla Walla, Washington, at ten minutes past one on the afternoon of Saturday, August 25, 1928. She was fifty-four years old. Her husband B. T. served as informant on the death certificate, which gave her usual residence as Freewater, Oregon, and her place of birth as Washington County, Virginia.

> *Typhoid fever, caused by Salmonella enterica serovar Typhi, was still a significant cause of death in the United States in the late 1920s, transmitted primarily through contaminated water or food. Mortality rates ranged from roughly ten to fifteen percent in untreated cases; effective antibiotic treatment lay nearly two decades in the future, with chloramphenicol becoming available only in 1948. Intestinal hemorrhage was among the most serious late-stage complications. The contraction of the disease in Oklahoma, weeks before her arrival in Walla Walla, is consistent with the typical incubation and progression of the illness.*

Her funeral was held in Freewater on Monday afternoon, August 27, 1928. She was interred in the Mountain View Mausoleum at Walla Walla, Washington — where her husband would be laid beside her three years later. Her marble plaque reads simply "MOTHER · MARIA K. HALEY · APR. 27, 1874 · AUG. 25, 1928."

Three Oregon and Washington papers carried obituary notices. The Spokesman-Review for September 4, 1928 ran the fullest of them under the headline "Last Rites for Mrs. Haley — Lived in Oregon 10 Years — Native of Virginia," noting that she had lived in Oregon for the last ten years and had died after an illness of several weeks; she was survived, the paper reported, by her husband and seven children. The Lebanon Express the same week noted her

as "a former resident of Lebanon, but recently of Freewater" — a reference to the brief period the Haleys had spent prospecting in the Willamette Valley before settling at Freewater.

The most evocative obituary, however, ran in the Altus Times-Democrat in Oklahoma — her old country. Under the headline "Mrs. Hailey Dies in Oregon State — Daughter of Pioneer Preacher of Olustee," the paper reported the news that had been received in Olustee on the Saturday of her death and identified her, with a particular kind of pride, as the daughter of the Reverend G. W. Whicker, "deceased, pioneer preacher of Olustee and Jackson county." The paper named her four sisters and two brothers: Mrs. Billy Williams of Olustee, Mrs. A. L. Brodie of Olustee, Mrs. Leonard of Duke, Mrs. C. H. Bavius of Eldorado, Walker Whicker of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and G. S. Whicker of Oklahoma City. A correction the following day added two further sisters whose names had been omitted in the first report: Mrs. William Montgomery of Olustee and Mrs. W. T. Clark of Olustee. Funeral services, the paper noted, had been held at Freewater that day.

SUMMARY

Maria Catherine “Kate” Whicker Haley was a Virginia-born minister's daughter who married into a Washington County farming family at twenty-two and spent the next thirty-one years moving west with her husband — first to the Oklahoma plains, then to the fruit country of the Walla Walla Valley. She was, in turn, a country schoolteacher of recognized ability, the recorder of her local Royal Neighbors of America camp, the mother of seven children, the vice president of her church's Ladies' Aid Society, and — at her ease — a woman who could win a blindfolded cherry-tree-cutting prize at a Washington's Birthday silver tea.

What the record captures best is the texture of her standing in two interconnected communities: Olustee, Oklahoma, in which she spent the most active years of her marriage and motherhood, and the Federated Church and fruit-ranching community of Freewater, Oregon, which she helped build in her last decade. The 1917 farewell party at Billy Williams's home, with its hundred-strong gathering of relatives and neighbors hoping she and Tom would come back to Oklahoma, suggests how thoroughly she had been woven into the social fabric of the Oklahoma years; the 1922 election to the Ladies' Aid vice presidency at Freewater suggests how quickly she put down comparable roots in Oregon.

She died too young, at fifty-four, of a disease that would have been entirely treatable a generation later. The Altus Times-Democrat's obituary, identifying her first by her father's

name and only secondarily by her husband's, captured the way her Oklahoma community remembered her: not as Mrs. B. T. Haley, the fruit rancher's wife at Freewater, but as Kate Whicker, daughter of the pioneer preacher of Olustee. Both identities were true, and the steady visits home in the 1920s suggest she carried both with her throughout her life.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Maria Haley, State of Washington, Walla Walla County; Record No. 150; Registered No. 157; principal cause: typhoid fever; secondary: intestinal hemorrhage; contributory: exhaustion; physician Dr. S. K. Whitacre, Walla Walla; informant: B. T. Haley, Freewater, Ore.; filed August 27, 1928.

Marriage Certificate (certified copy) — Benj. T. Haley and Katie Whicker, Washington County, Virginia, 1 March 1897; certified 8 March 1974; Marriage Register No. 1, Page 231.

Deed of Conveyance — B. T. Haley and Kate Haley to R. W. Sharrett, Trustee for Harriett C. (Haley) McCoy; 14 February 1899; Greer County, Oklahoma Territory; recorded Washington County, Virginia, Deed Book 59, Page 299, 4 June 1900.

Mountain View Cemetery / Mausoleum — headstones of B. T. Haley and Maria K. Haley, Walla Walla, Washington (photographed May 2004).

Newspaper Sources

The Olustee Outlook (Olustee, Oklahoma) • 3 Aug 1905 • 26 Jul 1906 • 26 Mar 1908 • 23 Apr 1908

The Olustee Democrat (Olustee, Oklahoma) • 28 May 1914 • 1 Apr 1915 • 8 Mar 1917 • 8 Nov 1917

East Oregonian (Pendleton, Oregon) • 28 Apr 1911 • 28 Jun 1924

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The Capital Journal (Salem, Oregon) • 10 Jul 1926 • 15 Jul 1926

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The Lebanon Express (Lebanon, Oregon) • 14 Jul 1926 • 29 Aug 1928

The Altus Times-Democrat (Altus, Oklahoma) • 27 Aug 1928 • 28 Aug 1928

Family and Genealogical Sources

FamilySearch family record — Maria Catherine Whicker (1874–1928), ID 2WHX-9BC, daughter of George Washington Whicker and Emma C. Fleenor; spouse of Benjamin Thomas Haley (2W63-RKT).

Family portrait photograph — (c. 1925), B. T. and Kate Haley with their seven children, Cherry Grove farm, Freewater, Oregon (family collection).

Photograph — B. T. and Kate Haley with young son and Paige automobile, c. 1920 (family collection).

MELBOURNE LEROY BURNETT

Telegraph Operator • Railway Station Agent

NEW BRUNSWICK • ALBERTA • OREGON

Also known as: M. L. Burnett • Melbourne Burnett

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	August 21, 1885, Petitcodiac, Kings County, New Brunswick, Canada
DIED	October 25, 1937, Portland, Oregon (age 52)
BURIAL	The Dalles, Oregon
FATHER	Samuel Melbourne Burnett (1858–1917)
MOTHER	Margaret Jane Brown (1863–1942)
MARRIED	February 15, 1916, Vanrena, Alberta, to Daisy May Propst (1897–1997)
CHILDREN	Melbourne Armour Burnett (1917–1917) Margaret Ellen Burnett (1918–1997) Claude Howard Burnett (1919–1999) Laura May Burnett (1920–2016)
SIBLINGS	Claude Armour Burnett (1889–1955) John Elias Burnett (1890–1963) Samuel Lloyd Burnett (1892–1938) Margaret "Maggie" Morton Burnett (1896–1899) James Alexander Burnett (1898–1983) Mary Fidelia Burnett (1901–1999) Laura Berniece Burnett (1903–1992)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Melbourne Leroy Burnett was born on August 21, 1885, in Petitcodiac, New Brunswick, the eldest son of Samuel Melbourne Burnett and Margaret Jane Brown. He grew up in the household of a schoolteacher who also served as a Justice of the Peace and Worshipful Master of the local Orange Lodge — a man of civic standing in a small New Brunswick market town. That upbringing left its marks: a practical intelligence, a comfort with institutional life, and a readiness to take on civic responsibility wherever he settled.

As a boy, Melbourne was the nine-year-old son mentioned in an October 1894 newspaper report describing a serious accident at the I.C.R. (Intercolonial Railway) station platform in Petitcodiac. He fell and sustained internal injuries, and his recovery was described as uncertain. That he went on to make his career as a telegraph operator — a profession centered on railway stations — gives that early brush with the railway an ironic resonance.

> *Melbourne came of age during the peak years of Canadian railway expansion. By the time he entered the workforce, telegraphing was the essential nervous system of the railway network. Station telegraphers received and transmitted train orders, managed arrival and departure times, and often served as the community's link to the outside world. It was skilled, responsible work.*

ALBERTA: TELEGRAPH OPERATOR IN THE PEACE RIVER COUNTRY (C. 1914–1918)

By the mid-1910s, Melbourne Burnett had made his way west to the Peace River country of northern Alberta, where the provincial government was operating a telegraph line connecting Edmonton to the remote settlement communities of the far north. He was employed as an operator at the Peace River office — a skilled position that required literacy, manual dexterity, and the ability to work in isolation in a frontier environment. He was about thirty years old when he arrived; Daisy Propst, the operator he would meet across the wire at Van Rena, was eighteen.

> *The Peace River country in northern Alberta was still an open frontier in the 1910s. The provincial government telegraph line was a vital lifeline for scattered homesteaders and the small service towns that supported them.*

Like other public institutions, the government line was officially closed after certain hours each evening. To the operators, however, this closure did not apply, and it became quite a common thing for the guardians of the keys to chat with one another through the long winter nights. It was in this way that Melbourne Burnett, a few months after arriving at Peace River, became acquainted with Miss Daisy May Propst, who was employed in the same capacity at Van Rena, a posting some distance to the south.

> *Telegraph courtships were not unheard of in the era, particularly along remote government or railway lines where operators at different stations were the only people in regular contact across great distances. Marrying a fellow operator was common enough that it was a recognized social phenomenon.*

The marriage ceremony was performed on Tuesday, February 15, 1916, by Rev. F. W. A. Armstrong — who spliced the wires using the Morse code — at the office of the bride's parents in Vanrena. The young couple took up residence in the government building at Peace River. The Edmonton Journal's account of all this, published on February 24th under the headline "Romance of The Peace River Country," is the most vivid single document that survives of Melbourne's early life, and it captures something essential: a man at ease in his circumstances, with a wife who had matched him across the wire before she met him in person.

The first year of their marriage brought both celebration and grief. On January 4, 1917, a son was born to them — named Melbourne Armour Burnett. In the weeks after Melbourne Armour's birth, Daisy had taken ill and was confined to her room; Melbourne took the baby to hospital and was reported to be acting as nurse to his wife. Melbourne Armour died in April, at nearly three months old. The Edmonton Journal carried a funeral notice on April 12th: a solemn service held in the Methodist church, the perfume of Easter lilies in the air, four little boys from the Sunday school serving as casket-bearers. The child was interred in the Peace River cemetery.

The cause of Melbourne Armour's death was not recorded in the newspaper accounts, but their daughter Margaret — speaking in a 1986 family video recorded when Daisy was still living — supplied what the papers could not. According to Margaret, Daisy contracted erysipelas, a serious bacterial infection, during or after the birth, and the baby contracted it as well. Margaret believed the infection was acquired at the hospital and that the hospital acknowledged as much: the family was not billed for Daisy's stay. "She stayed there for free," Margaret recalled, "but the baby died."

> *Erysipelas is a streptococcal infection of the skin and underlying tissue, known in the early twentieth century as a serious and sometimes fatal condition. Before the antibiotic era, hospital-acquired infections of this kind were not uncommon, and an infant would have had virtually no resistance. Margaret's account — offered sixty-nine years after the event, relying on what she had been told by family — is the only explanation of the infant's death that survives. It cannot be independently verified but is consistent with known patterns of puerperal and neonatal infection in the period.*

That same spring brought the death of Melbourne's father in Petitcodiac. Samuel Melbourne Burnett suffered a paralytic stroke on Sunday evening, May 20, 1917, and never recovered, dying at midnight.

Life continued, and with it the steady rhythm of life on the Peace River line. In July 1917, Melbourne was transferred to Dunvegan. The transfer kept him within the same provincial telegraph network, and the couple remained a familiar presence in the Peace River social columns.

On January 2, 1918, a daughter, Margaret Ellen, was born at the Irene Cottage Hospital in Peace River, the family having come in from Dunvegan for the birth. Margaret arrived without a doctor present and Melbourne learned the news by telegram from his posting at the Dunvegan office. A letter he wrote to Daisy that same evening survives and is the most personal document in the entire record of his life. He wrote of his relief and joy, of playing violin all afternoon in celebration — of telephoning neighbors to share the news, of driving to the Hudson Bay Company to mail letters. His rheumatism had been worsening since Daisy left. For two days he had barely been able to raise his right arm; his shoulders and knees ached. He had eaten almost nothing.

> *"This is my day off in celebration. Wait till you get home. Won't I hug and kiss the two of you." … "This country is no white man's country. I am sure of that." … "Good night little sweetheart. I hope so much you are feeling well. All my love to the both of you. Kiss her for me. From husband and Papa — Melbourne." — Melbourne L. Burnett to Daisy Burnett, Dunvegan, Alberta, January 2, 1918*
>
> *The January 2, 1918 letter is a rare window into the private Melbourne Burnett. It also foreshadows the departure from Peace River eleven months later. His comment that he did not want "land or anything that will tie us here, unless we are darn well prepared" anticipates almost exactly the language the Peace River paper would use in December 1918 when reporting the family's departure for Portland. The rheumatism, the isolation, and the grief of the previous year were all pressing toward the same conclusion.*

Three weeks after the birth, the Peace River paper noted Melbourne visiting town over the weekend, accompanied by Mrs. Burnett and the baby daughter, making the trip from Dunvegan in a covered caboose — described as the most comfortable rig in the country, fitted with a tent-like striped awning, seats, and a small heating stove — which allowed the family to travel regardless of weather. Daisy's brother, Howard L. Propst, also visited Dunvegan that February, travelling from Ontario, Oregon, to see his sister.

> *Travel between remote Alberta communities in winter remained a significant undertaking well into the 1920s. Roads were rudimentary and, in many areas, non-existent; sleigh travel was still the*

> *primary means of moving between settlements during the winter months, and a well-equipped sleigh was a genuine point of community pride.*

On February 15, 1918, the Burnetts celebrated their second wedding anniversary with a dance at Dunvegan. Despite the mercury registering fifty degrees below zero, two sleigh loads came from twenty-three miles away, and others from twelve and fifteen. Chicken sandwiches, doughnuts, cookies, coffee, and many kinds of cake were served at midnight. By October of that year, Melbourne had acquired a Ford (probably a Model T) — the Peace River paper observing that they might now expect to see him in town often. But December brought news of a different kind: Melbourne and Daisy had disposed of their personal effects and were leaving on Tuesday's train for Portland, Oregon, where Melbourne hoped to find relief from rheumatism that had been troubling him for some time. He stated that should his health improve sufficiently, he hoped to return to Peace River in the spring. It was a departure that proved permanent.

> *The decision to leave Peace River in December 1918 was framed publicly as a health measure, and rheumatism was a genuine concern in the cold and damp of northern Alberta winters — one Melbourne had been suffering privately since at least January of that year. But Daisy's family — the Propsts — had connections to the Oregon farming country, and the Pacific Northwest offered a milder climate and established communities with railway employment. Melbourne's trajectory from that point — straight to the Columbia River country, where he would spend the rest of his life as a Union Pacific agent — suggests the move was as much a deliberate resettlement as a medical retreat. Both he and Daisy had made a host of friends at Peace River and Van Rena, the paper noted, who would miss them from social activities.*

OREGON: UNION PACIFIC STATION AGENT AT BIGGS (C. 1919–1937)

Biggs, Oregon, sits on the Columbia River in Sherman County, a small community that owed its existence largely to the Union Pacific Railroad and the river traffic it served. Melbourne Burnett arrived there sometime around 1919 or shortly after, and the town became the fixed point of his working life for the remainder of it. He served as station agent at Biggs for fifteen years — out of an eighteen-year total with the Union Pacific, according to his 1937 obituary — and the work suited him well. A station agent combined telegraphy with freight management, scheduling, and local administration: exactly the range of skills Melbourne had been developing since his Peace River years.

The family's life at Biggs was inseparable from the depot itself. Margaret recalled in 1986 that they lived in a section of the station building, about eight to ten feet from the railroad tracks — a kitchen, living room, and two bedrooms, with no electricity and no telephone. As many as seventeen trains would come through in a single night, stopping to take on water and blow off steam. It was the kind of childhood in which the railway was not a distant institution but the physical substance of daily life. Melbourne was the parent most present to the children; Daisy worked as an operator, and it was Melbourne who raised them, managing the household from within the depot where he also managed the freight and the telegrams.

Margaret's description of her father in that 1986 interview is the fullest portrait of Melbourne that any source provides. He was five feet seven inches tall with what she remembered as a fourteen-inch chest expansion — a point of pride he mentioned himself — with small hands and small feet. He was a man of authority in the home, and Margaret spent her childhood and much of her life trying to please him. She was not permitted to argue or qualify: "yes, but" was not allowed. "I was always scared of my Dad," she said, adding that even decades later she found herself unable to get her thoughts out when challenged, a habit she traced directly to him. He wanted her to become a school teacher — a goal she was still working toward when he died.

> *The portrait Margaret paints is of a man who was demanding and self-contained — intensely male, in her phrase, as if compensating for his slight build — but one whom his family nonetheless worked hard to please rather than to escape. That Margaret, in the same interview, described missing him and feeling his loss acutely when he died in her sophomore year of college, suggests the relationship was complicated rather than simply cold. His authority over the household was real, but so was his presence in it.*

Melbourne's health became a recurring concern in the Oregon years. At some point before his death he was temporarily removed from railway service because his blood pressure was dangerously high. He was placed on a restricted diet — Margaret recalled him being permitted little more than bananas and lettuce — and she remembered him saying, with some frustration, "I would like some meat." The episode is consistent with the death certificate's finding of hypertension as a contributing cause to his coronary thrombosis.

The social record of the early Oregon years is thin, but in October 1923 the Capital Journal in Salem noted that automobiles driven by Minnie Hartley of Silverton and M. L. Burnett of Biggs had collided on Church Street on Sunday — slight damage to each vehicle, no injuries.

A week later, the Albany Democrat placed Mr. and Mrs. Melbourne Burnett and children of Biggs among the crowd of relatives who descended unexpectedly on the J. W. Propst home at Knox Butte for a surprise Sunday gathering, alongside the other families. The Propst connection gave Melbourne and Daisy a natural home community in the Willamette Valley — a point of gathering when old friendships called — even as their working life was anchored to the Columbia River country.

By the early 1930s, Melbourne and Daisy had become established members of the fraternal life of Sherman County. In January 1930, the Sunday Oregonian listed the newly installed officers of Annie Fulton Chapter No. 124, Order of the Eastern Star, at Wasco: Melbourne Burnett as Associate Patron, and his wife Daisy M. Burnett as Adah. Both were active officer roles, not nominal memberships, and the joint installation reflects the degree to which the couple had built civic standing in their adopted community. Melbourne was also a member of the Masonic Lodge and Eastern Star at Wasco and held membership in the Royal Arch and White Shrine at The Dalles — a pattern of fraternal engagement that connected him, perhaps unknowingly, to a long family tradition: his father Samuel had served as Worshipful Master of the Orange Lodge at Petitcodiac.

> *The Order of the Eastern Star, the principal Masonic-affiliated fraternal organization open to both men and women, had a strong presence in the Columbia River communities of north-central Oregon in the 1920s and 1930s. The positions of Associate Patron and Adah are among the principal officer roles within a chapter. Melbourne and Daisy's joint installation at Wasco Chapter No. 124 in January 1930 places them as full participants in the organized social and civic life of Sherman County — people who had put down genuine roots, not transients passing through.*

DEATH: OCTOBER 25, 1937

Melbourne Burnett died on the night of Monday, October 25, 1937, at the emergency hospital within Union Station in Portland, Oregon. He was fifty-two years old. The circumstances of his death were witnessed by Daisy and later described in detail by their daughter Margaret in her 1986 interview.

Melbourne and Daisy had travelled to Eugene for homecoming at the University of Oregon, where Margaret was in her sophomore year. They attended the football game and came to the sorority house for dinner, then left to return to Biggs — taking the train to Portland, where they were to change trains. At Portland's Union Station, Melbourne reached up to place a

suitcase on the overhead luggage rack, sat down in his seat, and put his head back. Daisy told Margaret that he suddenly burst into perspiration all over his body, and that was it. Daisy initially thought he had fainted. He was taken off the train and into the depot. Shortly afterward, attendants came out to Daisy carrying his rings and his watch — and he was not yet confirmed dead. He did not survive. Daisy declined to have an autopsy performed, and Margaret said she never knew the exact cause of death: "It must have been a stroke and a heart attack."

The death certificate, filed in Multnomah County, listed the principal cause of death as coronary thrombosis, with hypertension as a contributing cause — consistent with his earlier removal from service for high blood pressure, and with the same broad category of cardiovascular disease that had claimed his father via paralytic stroke twenty years earlier, at the age of fifty-eight.

Funeral services were held Thursday, October 28th, at The Dalles, Oregon, under the auspices of the Masonic lodge and Eastern Star to which he had belonged. His body had been brought from Portland to The Dalles for the service. Two obituary notices ran on the same day — the Oregon Daily Journal and The Dalles Chronicle — and they agree on the essentials: born at Petitcodiac, New Brunswick, August 21, 1885; eighteen years with the Union Pacific; fifteen of them as station agent at Biggs. He was survived by his wife Daisy M. Burnett of Biggs; two daughters, Margaret Ellen and Laura May; a son, Claude Howard; his mother, Margaret J. Burnett, then living in Cincinnati, Ohio; four brothers and two sisters.

For Margaret, his death at the start of her sophomore year was a turning point. She had been studying toward a teaching credential at his insistence; with him gone, she found herself wondering how she would complete college without that guiding purpose, and she eventually set her own direction. "I never really knew my father," she said in 1986. "He died when he was 52." She was nineteen.

> *Coronary thrombosis in a fifty-two-year-old man in 1937 offered essentially no treatment options beyond immediate rest, which the circumstances did not permit. That Daisy was present when he collapsed, and that the emergency facilities of Union Station were immediately at hand, made no material difference to the outcome.*

SUMMARY

Melbourne Leroy Burnett was a New Brunswick school teacher's son who spent his working life at the key — first on the government telegraph lines of the Peace River frontier, then as a Union Pacific station agent on the Columbia River. He arrived in Peace River country as a young man of thirty, courted his wife over the wire when the line was officially closed for the night, buried a son in the Peace River cemetery, danced with his neighbors at fifty below zero on his second anniversary, and eventually left for Oregon when his health demanded a milder climate.

In Oregon he built a settled, civic life: station agent at Biggs for fifteen years, Mason and Eastern Star officer at Wasco, familiar figure in the fraternal world of Sherman County. He raised his children in a depot eight feet from the railroad tracks, with no electricity and no telephone, while seventeen trains came through each night. He was demanding and exacting with those children, particularly Margaret, who spent years trying to earn his approval and lost him before she had quite managed it. He died at fifty-two from a heart attack at Union Station in Portland, with his wife beside him. It was too young, as it had been too young for his father at fifty-eight.

The record he left is partly institutional — railway employment records, lodge rosters, birth and death notices — and partly the social columns of small newspapers that recorded comings and goings in the way small newspapers did. The Edmonton Journal's 1916 account of the courtship over the wire is the most vivid thing in it: two telegraph operators on a remote government line, the long winter evenings, the batteries draining, the question and the answer going back and forth. But the January 2, 1918 letter to Daisy — written the night their daughter Margaret was born, from the empty Dunvegan office — is something rarer: a private man, briefly visible. Playing violin alone in celebration. Eating almost nothing. Asking to be remembered to the newborn girl he had not yet seen. Signing himself “husband and Papa.”

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Melbourne L. Burnett, State of Oregon, Multnomah County; State Registered No. 5364; Local Registered No. 5643; principal cause: coronary thrombosis; informant: Daisy Burnett, Biggs, Oregon; filed 25 Oct 1937.

Alberta Marriage Certificate — Burnett, Melbourn Leroy and Propst, Daisy May; Date of Marriage: February 15, 1916; Place: Vanrena; Registration No. 1916-08-002807; issued June 25, 2015.

Newspaper Sources

Edmonton Journal (Edmonton, Alberta) • 24 Feb 1916 ("Romance of The Peace River Country") • 12 Apr 1917 (funeral notice, Melbourne Armour Burnett)

The Edmonton Bulletin (Edmonton, Alberta) • 10 Jan 1917 (birth notice, son) • 23 Feb 1917 (illness notice) • 7 Jan 1918 (birth notice, daughter Margaret) • 28 Jan 1918 (Dunvegan social note) • 11 Feb 1918 (H.L. Propst visitor notice)

Peace River Record (Peace River, Alberta) • 13 Jul 1917 (transfer to Dunvegan) • 25 Jan 1918 (Peace River visit) • 15 Feb 1918 (anniversary dance) • 15 Oct 1918 (Ford notice) • 20 Dec 1918 (departure for Portland)

The Capital Journal (Salem, Oregon) • 22 Oct 1923 (automobile collision)

Albany Democrat (Albany, Oregon) • 1 Nov 1923 (Knox Butte gathering, Propst home)

The Sunday Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) • 2 Feb 1930 (Eastern Star installation, Wasco Chapter No. 124)

The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, Oregon) • 31 Oct 1937 (obituary, M. L. Burnett)

The Times-Transcript (Moncton, New Brunswick) • 26 May 1917 (obituary, S. M. Burnett — lists "Melbourne" among survivors at Peace River)

Telegraph-Journal (Saint John, New Brunswick) • 28 May 1917 (obituary, Samuel Burnett)

Family and Genealogical Sources

Letter — Melbourne Leroy Burnett to Daisy May Burnett, January 2, 1918; written from Dunvegan, Alberta, on the day of Margaret Ellen Burnett's birth; transcribed family document.

Video interview transcript — Margaret Ellen Burnett Haley, recorded November 24, 1986; interviewers Carol Briggs and Mike Briggs; transcribed July 24, 2025. Source for: age of Melbourne and Daisy when they met; death of Melbourne Armour (erysipelas, hospital liability); physical description of Melbourne; depot living conditions at Biggs; Melbourne's role as primary parent; high blood pressure episode and restricted diet; circumstances of Melbourne's death at Union Station as described by Daisy to Margaret.

DAISY MAY PROPST

Telegraph Operator • Union Pacific Station Agent

OREGON • ALBERTA • OREGON

Also known as: Daisy Burnett • Daisy M. Burnett • Mrs. Daisy Manning • Daisy M. Burnett Piercey

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	December 4, 1897, Arlington, Gilliam County, Oregon
DIED	June 20, 1997, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon (age 99)
BURIAL	Lincoln Memorial Park Mausoleum, Portland, Oregon
FATHER	Henry Taylor Propst (1849–1929)
MOTHER	Ellen Robb Nickerson (1855–1943)
FIRST MARRIAGE	February 15, 1916, Vanrena, Alberta, to Melbourne Leroy Burnett (1885–1937)
SECOND MARRIAGE	June 15, 1940, Skamania County, Washington, to Berkley James Manning (1879–1958)
THIRD MARRIAGE	November 16, 1950, Montgomery County, Ohio, to Edwin D. Piercey (b. 1896, Beebe, Arkansas)
CHILDREN	Melbourne Armour Burnett (1917–1917) Margaret Ellen Burnett (1918–1997) Claude Howard Burnett (1919–1999) Laura May Burnett (1920–2016)
SIBLINGS	Howard Lawrence Propst (1872–1962) Frank Propst (1878–1878) Otis Wesley Propst (1880–1960)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Daisy May Propst was born on December 4, 1897, in Arlington, Gilliam County, Oregon — a small Columbia River town where her father, Henry Taylor (H. T.) Propst, had settled after crossing the plains as a child in a prairie schooner. The birth was announced in the Condon Globe on December 10th, which noted with good humor that her father was "nearly tickled

to death," and that Daisy's brother Howard L. Propst wanted readers to know the baby was not his. It had been nearly twenty years since the last arrival in the Propst family, and the event warranted notice.

Henry Taylor Propst was an Oregon pioneer of the first generation: born in January 1849, he had crossed the plains as a young child with a caravan of ox teams in 1852, losing both his parents en route. He eventually put down roots in the Willamette Valley and married Ellen R. Nickerson in Albany, Oregon, in October 1870. Their golden wedding anniversary in 1920 was celebrated by two sons — Howard L. (H. L.) Propst, then of Vanrena, Alberta, and Otis W. (O. W.) Propst of Vale, Oregon — and their daughter Daisy, by then Mrs. M. L. Burnett of Umatilla, Oregon. Henry Propst died on December 20, 1929, at the age of eighty, and was eulogized as a man who had spent his entire adult life in the Willamette Valley, rooted in the country his family had reached at such cost.

Daisy was the youngest of the three surviving Propst children. Her brother Howard L. Propst would follow her north to Alberta in the early 1910s, farming three quarter sections near Vanrena and maintaining close ties with his sister during the years she lived at Dunvegan. The family's center of gravity remained in Oregon's Willamette Valley, and it would pull Daisy back there eventually — but not before she had made a career of her own in the telegraph offices of Alberta's Peace River frontier.

> *The Propst family's deep Oregon roots — pioneer generation, Willamette Valley farming, the Columbia River towns — gave Daisy a particular kind of background: frontier-tested, practical, and accustomed to the distances that separated communities in the Pacific Northwest. Moving to Alberta as a young woman to work a government telegraph line would have seemed less exotic to someone raised in that tradition than it might have to others.*

EDUCATION AND EARLY LIFE

Daisy's obituary, published in The Oregonian in 1997, noted that she was a graduate of Spokane High School — placing her secondary education across the state line in Washington, which suggests the family may have spent time in the Spokane area during her adolescent years, or that she boarded there for schooling, as was common for rural students seeking secondary education.

By June 1914, Daisy was seventeen years old and crossing the Canadian border at Kingsgate, British Columbia, in the company of her father and other family members. The immigration

record shows Henry Taylor Propst listed as a farmer, giving Vale, Oregon, as his last American address and Edmonton, Alberta, as his destination, with $100 declared. Daisy is listed separately, age 17, Daughter, with $60.

> *The Kingsgate port of entry on the BC–Idaho border was a common crossing point for settlers moving between Oregon and the Alberta prairie. The 1914 timing coincides with the last major wave of pre-war homestead settlement in the Peace River country, when land was still available and the provincial government telegraph system was actively recruiting operators.*

ALBERTA: TELEGRAPH OPERATOR IN THE PEACE RIVER COUNTRY (C. 1914–1918)

Daisy May Propst became a telegraph operator at Van Rena (also spelled Vaurena), a government station in the Peace River country of northern Alberta, sometime between 1914 and 1916. The provincial government had built and maintained a telegraph line running from Edmonton to the remote settlement communities of the far north, and it employed operators at points along the line to receive and transmit messages, manage train orders, and serve as the communications link for isolated homesteading communities. It was skilled work, requiring literacy, manual dexterity, and self-sufficiency in a frontier environment.

The government line was officially closed after certain hours each evening — but not, as the Edmonton Journal would later report, for the operators themselves. In the long winter nights, it became quite a common thing for the guardians of the keys to chat with one another across the distances. It was in this way, a few months after Melbourne Leroy Burnett arrived as operator at Peace River, that he became acquainted with Miss Daisy May Propst at Van Rena.

The Edmonton Journal's account of the courtship — published February 24, 1916, under the headline "Romance of the Peace River Country" — is the fullest surviving record of how the relationship developed. The government Leyden jars and copper plates that furnished the electric current for the telegraph began, the Journal noted with some whimsy, to suffer from the nightly exchanges. Each evening an S.O.S. was sent from one end or the other until, finally, over the wires went the question and the answer.

> *Telegraph courtships were not unheard of along remote government or railway lines, where operators at different stations were often the only people in regular contact across great distances. The Peace River country of Alberta in 1915–1916 was still an open frontier: roads were rudimentary, communities scattered, and the winter months could make travel between settlements nearly*

> *impossible. Two operators on neighboring stations, chatting through the long evenings when the line was otherwise quiet, occupied a recognizable role in the social geography of the frontier.*

MARRIAGE AND THE PEACE RIVER YEARS (1916–1918)

The marriage ceremony was Tuesday, February 15, 1916, at the office of Daisy's parents in Vanrena. The certified Alberta marriage registration, issued in 2015 from records filed at Edmonton, confirms the date, the place, and the names: Burnett, Melbourne Leroy, of New Brunswick; Propst, Daisy May, of U.S.A. The young couple took up residence in the government building at Peace River, within hearing, as the Journal put it, of the rattle of the keys as they growled the laments of the bachelors along the line.

The first year of the marriage brought both joy and grief in close succession. On January 4, 1917, a son was born to the Burnetts — named Melbourne Armour Burnett. Within weeks, both Daisy and the baby fell seriously ill: she contracted erysipelas at the hospital, and the infant caught it from her. The hospital, as Daisy's daughter Margaret would later recall, acknowledged that the infection had been its responsibility and waived the family's bills. Daisy was confined to her room; Melbourne took the baby to hospital and served as nurse to his wife. It was a difficult beginning, and it did not ease. Melbourne Armour Burnett died in April 1917, at nearly three months of age. The Edmonton Journal carried the funeral notice on April 12th: a solemn service in the Methodist church, Easter lilies filling the air, four little boys from the Sunday school serving as casket-bearers. The infant was interred in the Peace River cemetery, his death the first to occur among those enrolled in the Methodist Cradle Roll on the day of his birth.

> *Erysipelas — a severe streptococcal skin infection commonly contracted in hospital settings before antibiotics — was a leading cause of maternal and neonatal mortality in the early twentieth century. Margaret Haley's 1996 recollection that the hospital "didn't even send bills" because the infection was hospital-acquired is consistent with a recognized pattern of puerperal sepsis transmission from mother to newborn, and explains both Daisy's prolonged confinement and the rapid loss of the infant.*

In July 1917, Melbourne was transferred to Dunvegan, a posting further along the provincial network. The couple settled at Dunvegan, and on January 2, 1918, a daughter, Margaret Ellen, was born at the Irene Cottage Hospital in Peace River — Daisy having come in from the outlying posting some weeks earlier for the birth, while Melbourne stayed behind at Dunvegan

to tend the stock. No doctor was present at the delivery. Mother and baby came through it well.

Melbourne heard the news by wire that morning and wrote Daisy a long letter the same day — one of the few documents in this record that captures his voice directly. He had driven to the Hudson's Bay Company post to mail her letters, brought the violin home and played half the afternoon, fed the stock, and done "not a single tap of work" otherwise. He phoned the neighbors and reported their congratulations back to her. The dog Trixie, he wrote, had whined and jumped around when he brought her up from the barn that morning but would not go upstairs to look for Daisy: she had been fooled once before, hunting all over the house and not finding her. He signed off "from husband and Papa, Melbourne."

> *"This is my day off in celebration. Wait till you get home. Won't I hug and kiss the two of you."*
> *— Melbourne L. Burnett to Daisy Burnett, Dunvegan, Alberta, January 2, 1918*
>
> *The January 2, 1918 letter survived in family hands and was sent to Margaret Haley in adulthood. It is the most personal surviving glimpse of the Peace River household: the wire-carried news of the birth, the absence of a doctor, the violin in the empty house at Dunvegan, the dog still looking for the absent mistress. The endearment Melbourne used in the letter — "Plique" — is glossed in the family transcription as a French-Canadian phrase meaning roughly, "I want to hear your voice and be near you."*

Three weeks after the birth, Melbourne drove the seventy-odd miles in from Dunvegan to collect Daisy and the infant daughter and take them home. The Edmonton Bulletin noted the trip approvingly: the family had travelled in a covered caboose, described as the most comfortable rig in the country, fitted with a tent-like striped awning, seats, and a small heating stove.

February 15, 1918, brought their second wedding anniversary, and the Burnetts celebrated it with a dance at Dunvegan that the Peace River paper described in terms that speak for themselves: despite mercury registering fifty degrees below zero, two sleigh loads came from twenty-three miles away, and others from twelve and fifteen. Chicken sandwiches, doughnuts, cookies, coffee, and many kinds of cake were served at midnight. Whatever the privations of frontier life in northern Alberta, the Burnetts had made a community around them.

Her brother Howard L. Propst visited from Ontario, Oregon, that February as well, passing through Peace River to check on land he owned near Vaurena and to visit his sister at Dunvegan.

> *The winters of 1917 and 1918 in the Peace River country were severe by any measure. Travel between communities was conducted by sleigh, roads were often impassable, and the isolation of frontier postings was genuine. The anniversary dance — fifty below, sleigh loads arriving from twenty-three miles, midnight supper in a government building — was the social world Daisy inhabited.*

OREGON: UNION PACIFIC STATION AGENT (1919–C. 1950S)

In December 1918, the Burnetts disposed of their personal effects in Dunvegan and left on Tuesday's train for Portland, Oregon, where Melbourne hoped to find relief from rheumatism that had troubled him for some time. The Peace River paper noted that they had made a host of friends, both at Peace River and Vanrena, who would miss them from social activities. It was a departure framed as temporary, but it proved permanent.

They settled in the Columbia River country, and Melbourne took up work as a Union Pacific station agent at Biggs, Oregon — a small Sherman County community on the Columbia where the railway and the river traffic intersected. The depot itself was the family home: a living section perhaps ten feet from the railroad tracks, no electricity, no telephone, a wood stove in the kitchen and a gasoline lantern for light. Daisy worked at the key alongside her husband — Margaret would later recall her mother as working all the time, with the day-to-day raising of the children falling largely to Melbourne in the depot office. By 1920, the Sunday Oregonian identified Daisy as Mrs. M. L. Burnett of Umatilla, Oregon, attending the golden wedding anniversary of her parents in the Willamette Valley. The family was finding its footing in Oregon.

By November 1923, the Albany Democrat placed Mr. and Mrs. Melbourne Burnett and children of Biggs at a large surprise gathering at the J. W. Propst home at Knox Butte — the Propst family connection drawing them back to the Willamette Valley social world. Through the 1920s and into the 1930s, Daisy and Melbourne built a settled civic life at Biggs and The Dalles. In January 1930, the Sunday Oregonian listed the officers of Annie Fulton Chapter No. 124, Order of the Eastern Star, at Wasco: Melbourne Burnett as Associate Patron, and Daisy M. Burnett as Adah — both active officer roles, not nominal memberships.

Melbourne Leroy Burnett died on the night of October 25, 1937, at Union Station in Portland, of a heart attack — with Daisy beside him when he collapsed. He had reached up to put a suitcase on the rack above his seat, sat down, leaned his head back, and burst out in perspiration; the train was held while attendants carried him off, and his rings and watch were returned to Daisy in the depot before she fully understood what had happened. She refused an autopsy. He was fifty-two years old.

Their daughter Laura May married George J. Schatz Jr. at the First Congregational Church in The Dalles on February 19, 1939, a ceremony the Oregon Daily Journal covered at some length; the bride was given in marriage by her brother C. H. (Howard) Burnett.

Daisy continued her own career with the Union Pacific Railroad. Her 1997 obituary states that she worked as a station agent for forty-three years, retiring in the late 1950s. A 1947 notice in the Hermiston Herald referred to her as "Mrs. Daisy Manning, first trick operator at The Dalles" — indicating she was working as a senior operator at The Dalles station, and had by then remarried. Her death certificate confirms her occupation as Station Agent, Union Pacific Railroad.

> *The title "first trick operator" referred to the senior operator working the first (day) shift at a station — a position of responsibility within the railway telegraph hierarchy. That Daisy held this position at The Dalles, one of the major Union Pacific stations on the Columbia River route, speaks to the skill and standing she had built over decades at the key. The forty-three years of Union Pacific service recorded in her obituary would have begun around 1915 — when she was working the government line at Van Rena — and ended in the late 1950s, a career spanning the full golden age of railway telegraphy.*

LATER LIFE AND SUBSEQUENT MARRIAGES

On June 15, 1940, in Skamania County, Washington, Daisy M. Burnett married Berkley James Manning of Multnomah County, Oregon. The marriage is confirmed by the Washington State certificate of marriage, filed with King County on July 11, 1940. The 1947 Hermiston Herald reference to “Mrs. Daisy Manning, first trick operator at The Dalles” places her in this marriage and in her Union Pacific work simultaneously. They were divorced in the late 1940s.

On November 16, 1950, in Montgomery County, Ohio, Daisy M. Burnett married Edwin D. Piercey, a railroad conductor from The Dalles, Oregon. The Ohio marriage abstract notes that Daisy was fifty-two years old, residing in Dayton, Ohio at the time, and had been previously

married twice. It was this final marriage — as Daisy M. Burnett Piercey — under which she was identified in her death records and obituary. Edwin D. Piercey predeceased her; her death certificate lists her marital status as widowed.

> *The three marriages — to a telegraph operator, then a B. J. Manning (divorce), then a railroad conductor — trace a life spent in the world of railway and wire. Each of Daisy's husbands worked in or adjacent to the railway industry. The 1950 Ohio marriage abstract's listing of her occupation as "R R Telegrapher" at the time of her third marriage confirms that she continued working even as she entered her fifties.*

OLD AGE AND FAMILY MEMORY

By the mid-1980s Daisy was nearing ninety and living independently, still in regular phone contact with her son Howard, who would call her weekly and then telephone his sister Margaret with the news. A taped November 1996 family conversation recorded Margaret describing her mother as alert and still herself, though wearing hearing aids and unable to manage a telephone receiver held too close to her ear. The same conversation preserves Margaret's recollection of Daisy as a constant worker through the depot years at Biggs — a portrait that complements rather than contradicts the public record of Eastern Star officer and senior telegrapher: a woman whose working life ran straight through her domestic one without any clear interval between them.

DEATH: JUNE 20, 1997

Daisy May Propst Burnett Piercey died on June 20, 1997, in Portland, Oregon, at the age of ninety-nine. She died at Terwilliger Plaza, a Portland nursing and retirement facility, and was interred at Lincoln Memorial Park Mausoleum in Portland next to Edwin Piercey.

Her obituary in The Oregonian was brief and factual: born December 4, 1897, in Arlington; maiden name Propst; a graduate of Spokane High School; a resident of Portland for forty years; a Union Pacific station agent for forty-three years until her retirement in the late 1950s. She was survived by a daughter, Laura Schatz of Beaverton; a son, C. Howard Burnett of Portland; seven grandchildren; fifteen great-grandchildren; and eleven great-great-grandchildren.

SUMMARY

Daisy May Propst was an Oregon pioneer's daughter who spent most of her working life at the telegraph key and the station agent's desk, first on the government lines of the Alberta frontier, then for four decades with the Union Pacific on the Columbia River. She arrived in the Peace River country as a teenager, courted her first husband over the wire during the long winter evenings, nearly died of erysipelas after the birth of her first child and lost that child to the same infection, danced with her neighbours at fifty below zero on her second anniversary, and eventually came home to Oregon when rheumatism drove her husband south.

In Oregon she built a second career that outlasted her first marriage by twenty years. She reached the senior operator's desk at The Dalles, married twice more, and retired from the Union Pacific in the late 1950s after forty-three years of railway service. She lived to within months of her hundredth birthday and was survived by two children, seven grandchildren, fifteen great-grandchildren, and eleven great-great-grandchildren.

What the surviving record captures best is the texture of a long and mobile working life lived close to the wire: the Edmonton Journal's 1916 account of the courtship between Van Rena and Peace River, her husband's January 1918 letter from Dunvegan on the day Margaret was born, the depot at Biggs ten feet from the tracks, the Eastern Star installation at Wasco in 1930, the first-trick operator's shift at The Dalles in 1947, and the weekly phone calls from her son in the 1980s.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Delayed Certificate of Birth — Daisy May Propst, Oregon State Board of Health, State File No. DF-15570; filed August 17, 1960; supported by affidavit of Howard L. Propst (brother) and photocopy of life insurance application.

Certificate of Death — Daisy M. Burnett Piercey, State of Oregon, Multnomah County; State File No. 97-014151; Local File No. 03306; principal cause: arteriosclerotic heart disease; informant: C. H. Burnett (son); filed June 25, 1997.

Alberta Marriage Certificate — Burnett, Melbourne Leroy and Propst, Daisy May; Date of Marriage: February 15, 1916; Place: Vanrena; Registration No. 1916-08-002807; issued June 25, 2015.

Washington State Certificate of Marriage No. 7758 — Berkley James Manning and Daisy M. Burnett; June 15, 1940, Skamania County; filed King County July 11, 1940.

Ohio Department of Health, Certified Abstract of Marriage No. 75155 — Edwin D. Piercey and Daisy M. Burnett; Montgomery County, November 16, 1950.

Report of Admissions at the Port of Kingsgate, B.C. — June 1914; Daisy Propst, age 17, Daughter, from Portland, Oregon.

Newspaper Sources

Condon Globe (Condon, Oregon) • 10 Dec 1897 (birth notice)

Edmonton Journal (Edmonton, Alberta) • 24 Feb 1916 (“Romance of The Peace River Country”) • 12 Apr 1917 (funeral notice, Melbourne Armour Burnett)

The Edmonton Bulletin (Edmonton, Alberta) • 10 Jan 1917 (birth notice, son) • 23 Feb 1917 (illness notice) • 28 Jan 1918 (Dunvegan visit) • 11 Feb 1918 (H. L. Propst visitor notice)

Peace River Record (Peace River, Alberta) • 13 Jul 1917 (transfer to Dunvegan) • 15 Feb 1918 (anniversary dance) • 20 Dec 1918 (departure for Portland)

The Sunday Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) • 7 Nov 1920 (H. T. Propst golden anniversary) • 2 Feb 1930 (Eastern Star installation, Wasco Chapter No. 124)

Albany Democrat (Albany, Oregon) • 1 Nov 1923 (Knox Butte gathering)

The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) • 25 Dec 1929 (obituary, Henry Taylor Propst) • Jun 1997 (obituary, Daisy M. Burnett Piercey)

The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, Oregon) • 31 Oct 1937 (obituary, M. L. Burnett) • 5 Mar 1939 (wedding, Laura May Burnett)

Hermiston Herald (Hermiston, Oregon) • 29 May 1947 (social note)

The Journal Herald • 16 Nov 1950 (marriage notice)

Family and Genealogical Sources

Family letter — Melbourne L. Burnett to Daisy M. Burnett, "Home" [Dunvegan, Alberta], January 2, 1918, on the day of Margaret Ellen Burnett’s birth; family transcription.

Family interview — Margaret (Burnett) Haley, recorded by Carol and Mike Briggs, November 24, 1996; consolidated transcript.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HALEY

Farmer • Landholder

WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Also known as: B. F. Haley • Benjamin Hailey • Benj. Haley

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	December 3, 1834, Montgomery, Virginia
DIED	June 27, 1895, Washington County, Virginia (age 60)
BURIAL	Washington County, Virginia
FATHER	John Thomas Haley (1811–1886)
MOTHER	Ann Elizabeth Melton (1817–1879)
MARRIED	February 2, 1868, Sullivan County, Tennessee, to Harriett (Hattie) Catherine Birdwell (1848–1921)
CHILDREN	Mary Elizabeth Haley (1868–1936) Benjamin Thomas Haley (1876–1931) William Henry Haley (1884–1952) Veril Haley (1885–1886)
SIBLINGS	Mary Elizabeth Haley (1838–1882) Henry H. Smith Haley (1840–1862) Martha Jane Haley (1843–1919) Virginia Elizabeth Haley (1845–1896) Frances Pocahontas Haley (1847–1928) Sarah Judith Haley (1849–1902) John Crockett Haley (1851–1907) Thomas J. Haley (1853–1854) Cynthia M. Haley (1854–1931) Matthew G. B. Haley (1857–1857) James Edward Haley (1862–1885)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Benjamin Franklin Haley was born on December 3, 1834, in Montgomery, Virginia, the eldest child of John Thomas Haley (1811–1886) and Ann Elizabeth Melton (1817–1879). His parents had married just under two years earlier, on April 27, 1833, also at Montgomery, Virginia. Both lived to see Benjamin into middle age — his mother dying in 1879 when he was forty-four, his father in 1886 when he was fifty-one — and Benjamin was the senior surviving son of a large household when his father died.

His brother, Henry H. Smith Haley, was born on December 1, 1840. He joined the Confederate Army in 1861. He died at the Battle of Brimstone Creek in Scott County on April 1, 1862 (age 21).

> *The Battle of Brimstone Creek was a bitter, localized skirmish reflecting the deeply divided loyalties of East Tennessee during the Civil War. Scott County was strongly pro-Union (even famously voting to secede from Tennessee to form the "Free and Independent State of Scott"), making it a hostile environment for Confederate operations.*

The births of Benjamin and his brothers and sisters were recorded in a handwritten family register that has survived as the most complete document of the Haley household. The register is headed simply A Register of Names and lists the children born to John and Eliza — "Eliza" being the familiar form by which Ann Elizabeth Melton was known in the family — between 1834 and 1857.

The Haleys were a settled landowning family centered in Goodson Township, in the southwestern corner of Washington County, where the Appalachian ridges press down toward the Tennessee border. Benjamin spent his entire life within that border region. He never made the kind of westward move that his sons and grandsons would later make to Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington State.

> *Washington County, Virginia, in the mid-nineteenth century was tobacco and small-grains country, a borderland community whose economy and social geography turned on the Holston River valley and the railway towns of Bristol and Abingdon. The Civil War — which Benjamin lived through as a young man of military age — disrupted that world profoundly, and the post-war decades saw many Washington County families regroup around farm, kin, and church. Benjamin's story belongs to that quieter generation: men who held on rather than moved on.*

MARRIAGE TO HARRIETT "HATTIE" BIRDWELL (1868)

On February 2, 1868, at the age of thirty-three, Benjamin Franklin Haley married Harriett ("Hattie") Catherine Birdwell. The marriage took place in Tennessee — almost certainly Sullivan County, where the Birdwell family lived — and is preserved in Hattie's own obituary, published in the Bristol Herald Courier on May 9, 1921. Hattie was born November 10, 1848, in Sullivan County, Tennessee, the daughter of Benjamin and Lydia (Duncan) Birdwell. She was nineteen years old at the time of the marriage; Benjamin was nearly fourteen years her senior.

That a Goodson Township, Virginia man crossed the state line to be married was unremarkable in a community whose social geography paid less attention to the line than the surveyors did. The Birdwell family lived just across the Tennessee border, close enough that the two households were neighbors in everything but jurisdiction. The marriage was a Baptist one in a Baptist community; Hattie had joined the Baptist church in early girlhood and remained a member for the rest of her life.

Together Benjamin and Hattie raised four children, three of whom lived to adulthood:

Mary Elizabeth Haley (1868–1936), the eldest, born the same year as her parents' marriage; she married Robert W. Sharrett — already a trusted family figure who would later serve as trustee on Benjamin's 1892 deed — and remained near Bristol, Virginia, for the rest of her life.

Benjamin Thomas Haley (1876–1931), who became a farmer and fruit rancher and eventually settled at Freewater, Oregon.

William Henry Haley (1884–1952), who farmed and later lived in Pasco, Washington.

Veril Haley (1885–1886), who died in infancy at about a year old; he is not mentioned in surviving newspaper notices of the family but is preserved in genealogical records of the Haley line.

The three surviving children all outlived their father by decades, and all three were named in their mother's 1921 obituary. The infant Veril was not — by 1921 he had been gone for thirty-five years.

> *The variant spelling "Hailey" appears in some Bristol-area newspaper sources and in Hattie's 1921 obituary, while Benjamin and his sons consistently used "Haley." This kind of variation between branches of the same family was common in the nineteenth-century South, and reflects the absence of standardized spellings rather than any genuine division of identity.*

LAND AND PROPERTY: GOODSON TOWNSHIP

The clearest direct evidence of Benjamin Franklin Haley's working life comes from two surviving deeds in the Washington County records. They show him as an active landowner over at least a decade, and they shed light on the family circle that surrounded him.

The earlier of the two deeds, dated August 29, 1882, was a transfer from David Spoor and his wife Margaret Spoor to Benjamin F. Haley as trustee. The land was a tract of about one acre and seventy-nine poles in Washington County, adjoining the lands of William Carrigan, Jacob Statzer, and others. The deed conveyed the parcel to Benjamin in trust for the benefit of Margaret Spoor's children — Ellen, Anne, John, Jennie, Hattie, and Benjamin Spoor — to be held during Margaret's lifetime, and at her death to vest in fee simple in those children, share and share alike. The deed was acknowledged before Notary Public Richard Nuckolls on October 20, 1882, and recorded in the Washington County Clerk's Office on October 23rd. That Margaret Spoor entrusted Benjamin Haley with the inheritance of her children speaks to his standing as a trustworthy figure in the local community.

A second deed, dated April 11, 1892, ran in the opposite direction: this time Benjamin himself was the grantor. He conveyed two parcels of his own land in Goodson Township into trust for the benefit of his wife Hattie and their children, with Robert W. Sharrett serving as trustee. The first parcel contained fifty acres adjoining the lands of Statzer and others, described as the tract Benjamin had purchased from James I. Reston. The second parcel was an undivided one-half of fifteen acres and forty-five and a half poles, which Benjamin and Hattie had bought together from Wallace Sells and his wife. The trust was to be held for Hattie's use during her lifetime, then for any of her children residing on the land until the youngest attained the age of twenty-one, at which point fee simple would vest in all of Hattie's children. The deed was witnessed before Justice of the Peace M. L. Cunningham on July 19, 1892, and admitted to record in the Washington County Clerk's Office on October 3, 1892.

> *The 1892 trust deed is striking in its protective intent. Rather than transferring his land outright, Benjamin placed it in the hands of a trustee — Robert W. Sharrett, the man who would later become his son-in-law by marrying Mary Elizabeth Haley — for the express purpose of securing*

> *Hattie and the children. He was fifty-seven years old at the time, with a wife fourteen years younger and three children still at home. It is an arrangement made by a man who has thought carefully about what would happen if he died first. He had three years left.*

Benjamin had paid one dollar in nominal consideration to Sharrett for the trust, with the real consideration declared to be "the love, confidence and esteem which the party of the first part has for his said wife." The phrase is not unusual for trust deeds of the period, but in this case it tracks accurately to what would soon happen: the early 1890s land arrangement carried Hattie and the children through Benjamin's death without dispute or distress.

DEATH: JUNE 27, 1895

Benjamin Franklin Haley died on June 27, 1895, in Washington County, Virginia. He was sixty years old. The date is established by two independent and authoritative sources: the obituary of his widow Hattie, published in the Bristol Herald Courier on May 9, 1921, which gives the date as June 27, 1895; and a sworn General Affidavit filed at Walla Walla, Washington, on November 24, 1917, in which his sons Benjamin T. Haley and William H. Haley — then aged forty-one and thirty-three respectively — testified under oath that their father Benjamin F. Haley "died the twenty-seventh day of June 1895; we were present at his death, saw him dead, and attended his funeral."

The 1917 affidavit is a particularly valuable document. It was filed in support of Hattie's pension application as the widow of her second husband, the Civil War veteran Francis M. McCoy of Co. D, 27th Missouri Infantry, and it required the sons to swear to the date and fact of their natural father's death so that the pension claim could proceed. Both sons travelled to the office of E. S. Nixon, Notary Public, in Walla Walla; both gave their addresses on South 1st Street; and both signed the same statement. It is the closest thing to a death certificate that survives for Benjamin Franklin Haley.

> *Vital records for Washington County, Virginia, in the mid-1890s are incomplete. Statewide death registration in Virginia did not begin in earnest until 1912, and most Washington County deaths from the 1890s are documented only through church records, family Bibles, newspaper obituaries, or — as in this case — collateral legal affidavits. No newspaper obituary for Benjamin himself has yet been located in surviving Bristol-area papers, and the cause of his death is not recorded in any source consulted here.*

Hattie was forty-six years old at her husband's death and was left with three children, the youngest still a minor. The 1892 trust deed she and Benjamin had executed three years earlier protected the family's land. She remarried in October 1898 to Francis M. McCoy, a Union veteran of the Civil War, and lived as Hattie McCoy for the rest of her life. McCoy himself died around 1917, and Hattie thereafter pursued the widow's pension claim that occasioned her sons' Walla Walla affidavit. She died at her daughter Mrs. Robert W. Sharrett's home on the Island Road near Smith's Crossing on the Sunday morning of May 8, 1921, at age seventy-two, and was buried at Walnut Grove Cemetery near Bristol after services at the Walnut Grove Presbyterian Church.

SUMMARY

Benjamin Franklin Haley's life is preserved primarily through the documents he left behind rather than through any single narrative source. The handwritten family register places his birth firmly within a large mid-century Virginia farming family — eldest of twelve children of John Thomas Haley and Ann Elizabeth Melton, who had married at Montgomery, Virginia, in April 1833. The 1882 and 1892 deeds show him as a working landowner of his community: a man whom neighbors trusted to administer property in trust for their children, and a man who in turn took careful steps to protect his own wife and children through formal legal arrangement. The 1917 sworn affidavit of his sons, given decades after the fact and a continent away, establishes the date and circumstance of his death with the kind of precision a death certificate would have offered, had Virginia required them at the time.

What emerges is a portrait of a settled Washington County farmer of the post-Civil War generation — Baptist by family religion, southwest Virginian by birth and choice, present at the death of his own grandmother in 1855 and present in the lives of his children long enough that two of them, decades later in another state, could swear under oath that they had been present at his death and attended his funeral. He never made the westward move himself. But the fact that his sons did — that B. T. Haley would settle in Oregon and W. H. Haley in Washington State — meant that Benjamin Franklin Haley's name and dates would travel west with them, preserved in oral memory and eventually committed to paper in courthouses and pension offices and obituary columns far from Goodson Township.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

General Affidavit — Walla Walla County, Washington, November 24, 1917; Benjamin T. Haley (age 41) and William H. Haley (age 33), sons of Harriet C. McCoy, formerly Harriet C. Haley, swearing that their father Benjamin F. Haley died June 27, 1895; filed in support of pension claim No. 1106.463 of Harriet C. McCoy, widow of Francis M. McCoy, Co. D, 27th Mo. Inf.; notarized by E. S. Nixon, Notary Public; received Pension Office, January 16, 1918.

Trust Deed — David Spoor and Margaret Spoor to Benjamin F. Haley, Trustee; Washington County, Virginia, August 29, 1882; for the benefit of Margaret Spoor's children Ellen, Anne, John, Jennie, Hattie, and Benjamin Spoor; acknowledged October 20, 1882, before Richard Nuckolls, Notary Public; recorded October 23, 1882, William G. Lowry, Clerk.

Trust Deed — Benjamin Haley to Robert W. Sharrett, Trustee, for the benefit of Hattie Haley and children; Washington County, Virginia, April 11, 1892; conveying 50-acre parcel (purchased from James I. Reston) and undivided half of 15 acres 45½ poles (purchased from Wallace Sells); witnessed July 19, 1892, M. L. Cunningham, Justice of the Peace; recorded October 3, 1892, D. Cunningham, Clerk; Deed Book 49, Page 5.

Newspaper Sources

Bristol Herald Courier (Bristol, Virginia) • 9 May 1921 (obituary of Mrs. Hattie Hailey-McCoy, establishing date of marriage to Benjamin Hailey (Feb. 2, 1868) and Benjamin's date of death (June 27, 1895))

Family and Genealogical Sources

Family register (handwritten manuscript) — "A Register of Names," listing the children of John I. and Eliza Haley, with birthdates 1834–1857 and the death of Jane Gunn (Feb. 23, 1855); family collection.

FamilySearch Family Tree — entry for Benjamin Franklin Haley, person identifier 2ZSQ-JLV; provides parents (John Thomas Haley 2ZVP-PB3, Ann Elizabeth Melton 2ZVP-5M3, married April 27, 1833, Montgomery, Virginia), spouse Harriet Catherine Birdwell (2W63-T9J, m. February 2, 1868, Tennessee), and four children: Mary Elizabeth Haley (2Z3Z-1GX, 1868–1936), Benjamin Thomas Haley (2W63-RKT, 1876–1931), William Henry Haley (MQTB-FDX, 1884–1952), and Veril Haley (2WHJ-PZC, 1885–1886). Also confirms 12 siblings, several with full names and dates not preserved in the handwritten family register.

Benjamin Thomas Haley Biography — companion document in this research, citing father as Benjamin Franklin Haley, b. December 1834, Montgomery, Virginia; mother Harriett Catherine Birdwell, b. November 1848, Sullivan, Tennessee.

HARRIET "HATTIE" CATHERINE BIRDWELL

Farm Wife • Mother

TENNESSEE • VIRGINIA • OKLAHOMA • OREGON • WASHINGTON

Also known as: Mrs. B. F. Haley • Hattie Haley • Mrs. Hattie Hailey • Hattie McCoy • Mrs. Francis M. McCoy • Harriet C. McCoy

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	November 10, 1848, Sullivan County, Tennessee
DIED	May 12, 1921, Goodson, Washington County, Virginia (age 72)
BURIAL	Walnut Grove Cemetery, near Bristol, Washington County, Virginia
FATHER	Benjamin Birdwell (1803–1888)
MOTHER	Lydia Duncan (1823–?)
FIRST MARRIAGE	February 2, 1868, Sullivan County, Tennessee, to Benjamin Franklin Haley (1834–1895)
SECOND MARRIAGE	October 16, 1898, Vernon, Wilbarger County, Texas, to Francis Marion McCoy (1838–1916)
CHILDREN	Mary Elizabeth Haley (1868–1936) Benjamin Thomas Haley (1876–1931) William Henry Haley (1884–1952) Veril Haley (1885–1886)
SIBLINGS	Elizabeth Birdwell (1842–1907) Alfred D. Birdwell (1843–Deceased) Athaliah Birdwell (1845–1850) Matilda Adelaid Birdwell (1847–1914) Reuel H. Birdwell (1850–1913) John Warfield Birdwell (1852–1924) Mary Magdalene Birdwell (1854–Deceased) Benjamin Franklin Birdwell (1856–1927) Nancy Jane Birdwell (1858–Deceased) Myra Marcellar Birdwell (1861–1930)

	Lydia Ann Birdwell (1863–1932) Laura Rebecca Birdwell (1866–1942)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Harriet Catherine Birdwell was born on November 10, 1848, in Sullivan County, Tennessee — the upland country along the Virginia border where the Holston River runs west toward the Tennessee. Her father, Benjamin Birdwell (1803–1888), was a Tennessee farmer; her mother, Lydia Duncan, was born June 29, 1823, and married Benjamin on December 3, 1841. The two of them, together with the long roll of children that followed, are recorded in a battered family Bible whose pages survived in the keeping of one of Harriet's daughters and were copied under oath in 1918 for a Civil War widow's pension claim.

She was one of thirteen Birdwell children. The Bible's birth pages, supplemented by the FamilySearch family tree, list her siblings as Elizabeth (1842–1907), Alfred D. (1843–?), Athaliah (1845–1850), Matilda Adelaid (1847–1914), Reuel H. (1850–1913), John Warfield (1852–1924), Mary Magdalene (1854–?), Benjamin Franklin Jr. (1856–1927), Nancy Jane (1858–?), Myra Marcellar (1861–1930), Lydia Ann (1863–1932), and Laura Rebecca (1866–1942) — most of them born within a year or two of one another in the manner of nineteenth-century farm households. Harriet appears in the public record consistently as Hattie, sometimes Mrs. B. F. Haley, sometimes Mrs. Hattie Hailey (with the alternate spelling that ran in some of the newspaper notices), and after her remarriage as Mrs. Francis M. McCoy or Harriet C. McCoy.

> *There is a discrepancy between Harriet's two earliest birth records. Her 1921 Virginia death certificate, with information supplied by her daughter Mrs. Sharrett, gives November 10, 1848, in Sullivan County, Tennessee. The Birdwell family Bible — copied under oath in 1918, three years before her death — records a child named "Sarah Catherine Birdwell" born September 10, 1848, with no separate entry for a Harriet or Hattie. Family knowledge identifies these as the same person: "Sarah Catherine" appears to have been Harriet's birth name as written into the Bible by her parents, with "Harriet" or "Hattie" emerging as the name she used in adult life. The Bible is the more contemporaneous record (written by her parents at the time of birth), but the death certificate's date is the one this biography retains as the canonical entry, with the Bible's September 10 date noted here for completeness.*
>
> *Sullivan County, Tennessee, in the 1840s and 1850s was thinly settled hill country, with farms cleared on the lower ridges and bottom land along the Holston. Families like the Birdwells were*

> *typical of the population: yeoman farmers raising large families on modest holdings, tied closely to neighbors across the Virginia line in Washington and Bristol counties. Harriet's eventual marriage into the Haley family of Wallace, Virginia, was in that sense a marriage across a state border that was, in practical and social terms, not really a border at all.*

FIRST MARRIAGE: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HALEY (1868–1895)

On February 2, 1868, when she was nineteen years old, Harriet Catherine Birdwell married Benjamin Franklin Haley in Tennessee. The marriage is recorded in the family Bible — "Benjamin & Hatty and Harriet C. Birdwell was married Feb 2nd 1868" — and confirmed in the Bristol Herald Courier obituary that ran more than half a century later. Benjamin Franklin Haley, born December 1834, was about fourteen years her senior, and he brought her across the line into Washington County, Virginia, where the Haleys held farming land near the small community of Wallace, west of Bristol.

The marriage produced four children: Mary Elizabeth (1868), who later married Robert W. Sharrett and remained near Bristol; Benjamin Thomas, known throughout his life as B. T. or Tom, born May 14, 1876, who would become a farmer in Oklahoma and a fruit rancher in Oregon; William Henry, called Bill or W. H., born in 1884, who eventually settled at Pasco, Washington; and Veril, born in 1885 and dying as an infant in 1886.

The Haley farm operation in Goodson Township, Washington County, was substantial enough by the 1890s to require formal legal arrangements. An indenture dated April 11, 1892 — preserved in the Washington County deed books — records Benjamin Haley conveying two tracts of farmland (one fifty-acre parcel and an undivided half of a fifteen-and-a-half-acre parcel) into a trust, with Robert W. Sharrett as trustee, for the benefit of "Hattie Haley the wife of Benjamin Haley." The deed expressed Benjamin's "love confidence and esteem" for his wife and provided that the property would be held for her use during her lifetime, with the proceeds available to her direction; on her death the land would pass to her children, with the youngest reaching the age of twenty-one fixing the date when fee simple would vest in all the heirs. It was a careful, deliberate piece of estate planning by a man who clearly intended to provide for his wife and children regardless of what came next.

> *Trust arrangements of this kind were common in late-nineteenth-century rural Virginia where a husband wished to ensure his wife retained the use of the family land regardless of her remarriage or any subsequent claims. The 1892 deed gave Hattie Haley both the security of lifetime tenure and the practical authority to direct the trustee's actions in writing. It also named her children —*

> *collectively, without listing them — as the eventual remaindermen, a structure that would prove to matter when she did remarry six years later.*

Benjamin Franklin Haley died on June 27, 1895, at sixty years old. The cause of death is not preserved in surviving sources. He left Harriet a forty-six-year-old widow with three living children: Mary Elizabeth (then twenty-six and married to Robert Sharrett), Benjamin Thomas (nineteen), and William Henry (eleven). The 1892 trust now governed her tenancy on the farmland, and her circumstances would have been those of a respectable widow in the rural community where she had lived for nearly thirty years.

BETWEEN MARRIAGES AND THE 1899 LAND SALE (1895–1898)

Harriet remained a widow for three years and four months. In that interval, the principal documented event in her life is a land transaction that gives a glimpse of how the 1892 trust functioned in practice. On February 14, 1899 — by which point she had already remarried — a deed was executed between her son B. T. Haley and his wife Kate, of Greer County, Oklahoma Territory, and Robert W. Sharrett of Washington County, Virginia, acting as trustee "for the benefit of Harriet C. Haley, once the wife and widow of B. F. Haley, deceased, but now the wife of Francis McCoy of Oklahoma."

The deed conveyed for $233.33 a fifty-acre tract about a mile west of Wallace — land which, the document noted, had been recently sold by Harriet C. Haley to one Tulwider, and which adjoined property of Wm. Sample (deceased), James Cruduff (deceased), and J. M. Goodman. The transaction was acknowledged before a notary at Greer County, Oklahoma, on February 21, 1899, and admitted to record at Washington County, Virginia, on June 4, 1900. Although the legal mechanics of the deed are intricate, the social facts behind it are straightforward: Harriet had remarried, she had moved to Oklahoma where her son B. T. and her new husband were both based, and the trustee was managing the sale of the original Haley farmland with the cooperation of her son.

SECOND MARRIAGE: FRANCIS MARION MCCOY (1898–1916)

On October 16, 1898, in Vernon, Wilbarger County, Texas, Harriet Catherine Birdwell Haley married Francis Marion McCoy. McCoy was a Civil War veteran — a private in Company D, 27th Missouri Infantry, who had marched with Sherman through Georgia under John A. Logan — and a man whose own marital history was substantial. Harriet was his fifth wife. His

first, Elizabeth Jane Carpenter, had died in 1857; his second, Sirena F. Carpenter, he had divorced; his third, Jane E. (Pomfret), had died in 1891; his fourth, Martha A., he had divorced in May 1898, only five months before his marriage to Harriet. The pension office's later notes — preserved in his Civil War widow's pension file — list these previous unions in characteristically dry shorthand: "Soldier's prior wives: 1st Elizabeth J. died Dec 15/57; Sirena F. divorced Jan 19/83; Jane E. died Mch 13/91; Martha A. divorced May 7/97." Harriet's prior marriage — to B. F. Haley, who had died June 27, 1895 — is similarly noted: "Former husband, Hailey, had no service." The McCoy marriage produced no children; Harriet was forty-nine at the time of the wedding, and McCoy already had eight surviving children from his earlier unions.

> *Francis Marion McCoy's life, as set out in his 1916 Lebanon Express obituary, was as mobile as his marital record was complicated. Born in Pike County, Illinois, in January 1838, he lived there until age seventeen, then moved to Bates County, Missouri, then to Colorado for six years, then to Oklahoma for eighteen years, then to Lebanon, Oregon, in 1912.*

The Olustee newspapers of the early 1900s capture the McCoys as fixtures of the social world that B. T. Haley and his Whicker in-laws also inhabited. In May 1907, the Olustee Outlook reported that "Mrs. W. H. Haley, who is ill of slow fever, was removed last week to the country home of Mr. Haley's mother, Mrs. F. M. McCoy" — placing Harriet, then known by her McCoy married name, in the role of the family matriarch to whom a sick daughter-in-law was brought for care. In January 1908, the same paper noted in its social columns that "Bill Haley and family, Mr. and Mrs. McCoy were visitors at Tom Haley's Sunday" — Harriet visiting her son B. T. with her McCoy husband, in the routine social pattern of the small farming town. A month later, Bill Haley and family, Tom Haley and family, and Billie Williams and wife were recorded as visitors at F. M. McCoy's, completing the picture of two generations of an extended Haley family circulating between each other's homes on Sunday afternoons.

By 1912, the McCoys had relocated to Lebanon, Oregon, in the Willamette Valley. On July 20 of that year, the Albany Democrat's Court House Notes recorded a warranty deed from Francis M. McCoy to Harriett C. McCoy — ten acres in claim 63, township 12, range 2 west, sold for eight hundred dollars. Four years later, on August 14, 1916, Francis M. McCoy died in Lebanon at seventy-eight years old after an extended illness from diabetes. His Lebanon Express obituary listed eight surviving children from his earlier marriages, ranging across North Dakota, Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Oregon, and noted that the Lebanon Masonic

lodge had charge of the funeral at the Christian Church. Harriet — listed simply as "a widow" — survived him.

WALLA WALLA AND THE CIVIL WAR WIDOW'S PENSION (1917–1918)

In the months after Francis McCoy's death, Harriet relocated to Walla Walla, Washington — likely to be near her sons W. H. Haley at Pasco, just across the Columbia River, B. T. Haley, a few miles away in Freewater, Oregon — and filed for a Civil War widow's pension under McCoy's service. The pension index card, on file with the Bureau of Pensions, records the application: Class "Widow," filed August 28 [1917], Application No. 1,106,463, Certificate No. 863,717, State from which filed Washington. The certificate number indicates the claim was eventually approved.

The supporting documents Harriet assembled for the pension office in late 1917 and 1918 are, by some distance, the richest single body of evidence about her life. On November 24, 1917, her two sons B. T. Haley (age 41, of #366 S. 1st Street, Walla Walla) and William H. Haley (age 33, of #325 S. 1st Street) appeared together before a Walla Walla notary and swore a general affidavit identifying themselves as her sons and confirming that their father — Benjamin F. Haley — had died on June 27, 1895, with both of them present at his death and at his funeral. The affidavit was filed at the Pension Office on January 16, 1918.

Then, on November 13, 1918, Harriet turned over to E. S. Nixon, a notary public at Walla Walla, what the certified record describes as "an old family bible" containing the family record of marriages, births, and deaths going back to her parents' wedding in 1841. Nixon copied out the contents — Benjamin Birdwell and Lydia Duncan married December 3, 1841; Benjamin born February 6, 1803, Lydia born June 29, 1823; the long roll of Birdwell children; the Francis Marion McCoy marriages from 1856 onward; the McCoy deaths beginning with Elizabeth Jane in 1857 — and certified the copy on November 13th. On December 17th, Harriet appeared again before Nixon and swore that she was the widow of Francis M. McCoy, that the Bible was indeed her late husband's family Bible, and that the copy Nixon had made was true and correct. The notarized affidavit was received at the Pension Office on December 23, 1918.

> *The Civil War widow's pension system in the late 1910s required exhaustive documentation of identity, marital history, and service connection. For a fifth wife of a five-times-married veteran, the burden of proof was substantial — every prior marriage had to be accounted for, every prior wife's*

> *death or divorce documented. The family Bible, with its long handwritten record of Birdwell and McCoy events going back to 1841, was the kind of contemporaneous evidence the Pension Office prized, and Harriet's willingness to surrender it for transcription gave her case the documentary spine it needed. The fact that the Bible survived, was kept by Harriet personally, and was handed over for copying in 1918 is the principal reason so much detail of the Birdwell family's nineteenth-century history is preserved in the modern record at all.*

FINAL YEARS AND DEATH (C. 1919–1921)

By the late 1910s, Harriet had moved back across the country to her daughter Mary Elizabeth Sharrett's home on the Island Road near Smith's Crossing, just outside Bristol, Virginia — back, in effect, to the country she had lived in throughout her first marriage. Her death certificate, filed in Washington County, Virginia, records that she had been suffering from chronic heart disease (mitral regurgitation) for ten years. By the spring of 1921 the condition had worsened: the certifying physician, Dr. W. H. Lester, last saw her alive on April 30th, and recorded a contributory diagnosis of dropsy of fifteen days' duration.

She died at her daughter's home at 6:15 on Sunday morning, May 8, 1921, at the age of seventy-two years, five months, and twenty-eight days. The Bristol Herald Courier carried a substantial obituary the following morning which gave the essential facts of her life with the warmth small-town newspapers reserved for figures who had been part of the community for a long time. She had been born in Sullivan County, Tennessee, on November 10, 1848. She was the daughter of Benjamin and Lydia Duncan Birdwell. She had been twice married, first to Benjamin Hailey on February 2, 1868 — the paper's spelling of the name reflecting the alternate "Hailey" form that ran throughout the Bristol-area press — and second to Francis McCoy in October 1898. She was survived by three children: Mrs. Robert W. Sharrett of near Bristol, B. T. Haley of Freewater, Oregon, and W. H. Haley of Pasco, Washington. She had been a member of the Baptist Church from early girlhood.

Funeral services were conducted at eleven o'clock the morning after her death, May 13, 1921, from the Walnut Grove Presbyterian Church, by Dr. Tilden Scherer of King College. Interment followed at Walnut Grove Cemetery. The death certificate confirms the burial date: May 13, 1921, with no undertaker named — the family handling the arrangements directly, in the older rural pattern.

B. T. Haley made the journey east from Oregon for the funeral. The Bristol Herald Courier's social column for May 15, 1921, noted laconically: "B. T. Haley, who has been here for his mother's funeral, left yesterday for his home in Oregon." It was a long journey by rail in 1921, and a son who travelled it for his mother's burial was a son who had taken her death seriously.

SUMMARY

Harriet Catherine Birdwell's life followed the long arc that many women of her generation walked: born into a large farming family in the Tennessee uplands in the late 1840s; married at nineteen to a Virginia farmer fourteen years her senior; raising four children, of whom three survived to adulthood, on a farm in Washington County, Virginia, that was substantial enough to be put into formal trust on her behalf in 1892; widowed at forty-six; remarried at almost fifty to a much-married Civil War veteran whose own life had carried him from Illinois through Missouri, Colorado, Oklahoma, and finally Oregon; widowed a second time at sixty-seven; surviving her second husband by nearly five years and her first by twenty-six; dying at seventy-two at her daughter's home outside Bristol, Virginia, of the heart disease that had been narrowing her life for a decade.

What distinguishes her record, beyond the bare facts, is the family Bible. That object — printed in New York and bearing an 1869 copyright, kept by Harriet through both her marriages and produced for transcription before a Walla Walla notary in November 1918 — preserves, in a single piece of evidence, the marriage of her parents in 1841, her own birth in 1848, the births of her many siblings, and the elaborate marital history of her second husband. Without it, very little of the Birdwell family's nineteenth-century life would survive in any reconstructible form. Harriet was its custodian for fifty years, and her decision to surrender it to the federal pension office in 1918 — to prove what she needed to prove — is the reason this biography can be written at all.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Mrs. Hattie Haley McCoy, Commonwealth of Virginia, Bureau of Vital Statistics, State Board of Health; Registered No. 14169; Goodson, Washington County; born November 10, 1848, Sullivan County, Tennessee; died May 12, 1921; cause of death: chronic heart disease (mitral regurgitation), 10 years; contributory: dropsy, 15 days; physician Dr. W. H. Lester; informant Mrs. Sharrett, Bristol, Va.; burial Walnut Grove Cemetery, May 13, 1921; filed June 12, 1921, J. E. Phillips, Registrar.

Family Bible Record (Francis M. McCoy family Bible) — printed by S. W. Green, Printer, 18 Jacob Street, New York, 1869 copyright by A. D. Johnson; certified copy by E. S. Nixon, Notary Public, Walla Walla, Washington, November 13, 1918; affidavit of Harriet C. McCoy, December 17, 1918; received Pension Office December 23, 1918.

General Affidavit — Pension Claim No. 1,106,463 (Harriet C. McCoy, widow of Francis M. McCoy, Co. D, 27th Mo. Inf.); affidavits of Benjamin T. Haley (age 41) and William H. Haley (age 33), Walla Walla, Washington, November 24, 1917; received Pension Office January 16, 1918.

Civil War Pension Index Card — Francis M. McCoy, Co. D, 27th Mo. Inf.; Invalid Application No. 373,332 / Certificate No. 250,588 (filed June 1880); Widow Application No. 1,106,463 / Certificate No. 863,717 (filed August 28, 1917, Washington).

Pension Office "Soldier's Prior Wives" Memorandum — McCoy, Francis M.; lists prior wives Elizabeth J. (d. Dec 15, 1857), Sirena F. (divorced Jan 19, 1883), Jane E. (d. Mch 13, 1891), Martha A. (divorced May 7, 1897); confirms former husband Hailey (no service), died June 27, 1895.

Indenture — Benjamin Haley, Robert Sharratt (Trustee), and Hattie Haley; Washington County, Virginia, April 11, 1892; conveying two tracts in Goodson Township to trust for benefit of Hattie Haley.

Warranty Deed — B. T. Haley & Kate Haley (Greer County, Oklahoma Territory) to R. W. Sharrett (Trustee for Harriet C. Haley/McCoy); February 14, 1899; 50 acres west of Wallace, Washington County, Virginia; recorded June 4, 1900.

Warranty Deed — Francis M. McCoy to Harriett C. McCoy; July 20, 1912; 10 acres in claim 63, Tp. 12, S. R. 2 W., Linn County, Oregon; $800. Recorded Albany Democrat, July 26, 1912.

Newspaper Sources

Bristol Herald Courier (Bristol, Virginia) • May 9, 1921 (obituary, "Mrs. Hattie McCoy") • May 15, 1921 ("B. T. Haley, who has been here for his mother's funeral, left yesterday for his home in Oregon.")

The Olustee Outlook (Olustee, Oklahoma) • May 31, 1907 (Mrs. W. H. Haley removed to country home of Mrs. F. M. McCoy) • January 30, 1908 (social notes, McCoy & Haley visits) • February 20, 1908 (visitors at F. M. McCoy's)

The Lebanon Express (Lebanon, Oregon) • August 15, 1916 (obituary, Francis M. McCoy)

Albany Democrat (Albany, Oregon) • July 26, 1912 (Court House Notes — warranty deed, F. M. McCoy to Harriett C. McCoy)

Family and Genealogical Sources

FamilySearch Family Tree — Harriet Catherine Birdwell (PID 2W63-T9J), 1848–1921; spouses Benjamin Franklin Haley (2ZSQ-JLV) and Francis Marion McCoy (2WHJ-BPR); parents Benjamin Birdwell (L4WY-KQV, 1803–1888) and Lydia Duncan (L4WY-K79, 1823–deceased); thirteen Birdwell siblings: Elizabeth (KCTY-3D4), Alfred D. (L78M-ZLW), Athaliah (2WHV-7HK), Matilda Adelaid (KZYK-RY2), Reuel H. (2CT1-D95), John Warfield (2CT1-DSD), Mary Magdalene (2Z38-67W), Benjamin Franklin (L78M-Y2D), Nancy Jane (L78M-1GH), Myra Marcellar (L7FV-JHV), Lydia Ann (L789-3LW), Laura Rebecca (L789-76P); children with B. F. Haley: Mary Elizabeth (2Z3Z-1GX), Benjamin Thomas (2W63-RKT), William Henry (MQTB-FDX), Veril (2WHJ-PZC); no children with Francis Marion McCoy.

Family Photograph — sepia portrait of Hattie (Birdwell) Haley McCoy and Francis Marion McCoy, undated, c. 1898–1910 (family collection).

GEORGE WASHINGTON WHICKER

Civil War Veteran • Baptist Minister

VIRGINIA • KANSAS • OKLAHOMA TERRITORY

Also known as: Rev. G. W. Whicker • Rev. Geo. Whicker • Bro. Whicker • George Whicker

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	March 10, 1843, Washington, Virginia
DIED	January 1, 1908, Olustee, Jackson County, Oklahoma Territory (age 64)
BURIAL	Willow Vale Cemetery, near Olustee, Oklahoma Territory
FATHER	Newel Aaron Whicker (1807–1887)
MOTHER	Nancy P. Malinda Leonard (1822–1859)
MARRIED	January 29, 1865, Washington County, Virginia, to Emma C. Fleenor
CHILDREN	Joseph Teeter Whicker (1866–1918) Martha Frances Whicker (1868–1947) Mary Virginia Whicker (1870–1963) Lula Estelle Whicker (1873–1932) Maria Catherine "Kate" Whicker (1874–1928) George Smith Whicker (1876–1954) Zachariah Benjamin Whicker (1878–1924) Nannie Belle Whicker (1881–1967) William Thomas Whicker (1883–1883) Minnie Orlena Whicker (1884–1960) Henry Walker Whicker (1886–1953) Myrtle May Whicker (1890–1972)
SIBLINGS	Lydia Ann Whicker (1845–1916) Benjamin Frederick Whicker (1848–1937) Martha M Whicker (1851–1935) Rachel Catherine Whicker (1853–1921) Jennette Henrietta Whicker (1854–1861) William E. Whicker (1856–Deceased) John Whicker (1859–1861)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

George Washington Whicker was born in Virginia in 1843, in the Washington County region along the Tennessee border — tobacco country, shaped by the rhythms of the agricultural year and the social gravity of the Protestant church. He married Emma C. Fleenor in 1864, when he was about twenty-two. The Fleenors were a local family, and the marriage kept the young couple rooted in a community they knew. Together they would raise eleven children.

He had at least one brother who figures prominently throughout his life: Benjamin F. Whicker (known as Ben or B. F.) also a Baptist minister. The two men moved in parallel through much of their careers, converting from Methodism to the Baptists within a year of each other in the early 1890s, collaborating on revivals for the rest of their lives, and eventually settling within visiting distance of one another in the new lands of the Southwest, with Ben at Caldwell, Kansas, and George in Oklahoma Territory. When George died, it was Ben who made the journey to bury him.

> *Washington County, Virginia, in the mid-nineteenth century was a world defined by tobacco agriculture and the mountain borderland between Virginia and Tennessee. The Civil War disrupted that world profoundly — George Whicker enlisted in 1861 at seventeen and was not paroled until April 1865, a full four years of service (see Civil War section below). Returning veterans faced the task of reconstituting themselves economically and spiritually, and Baptist and Methodist congregations provided the framework within which much of that recovery happened.*

CIVIL WAR SERVICE (1861–1865)

George Whicker enlisted in the Confederate Army on June 15, 1861, at Washington County, Virginia, at the age of seventeen. He was mustered into Company F of the 48th Virginia Infantry as a private, with his occupation recorded as farmer. The 48th Virginia was a southwestern Virginia regiment that served throughout the eastern theater of the war.

His service record documents a difficult war. He was hospitalized four separate times: in October 1862 at Culpeper Court House with diarrhea, then again in Richmond the same month; in December 1862 in Richmond with smallpox; and in May 1863 in Charlottesville with edema. Disease killed more soldiers than combat on both sides, and Whicker's repeated hospitalizations reflect that grim reality.

The final months of his service illuminate how his marriage fits into the war record — a sequence that at first glance seems contradictory but is in fact entirely consistent. In November 1864 he was furloughed, returning home to Washington County. It was during that furlough, on January 29, 1865, that he married Emma Catherine Fleenor. One month later, in February 1865, he was detailed to Lynchburg, Virginia — returning to duty — and on April 13, 1865, just four days after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, he was paroled at Lynchburg and the war was over. The marriage was made possible by the furlough; the detail to Lynchburg ended it.

> *The word "paroled" in the April 1865 entry carries a specific meaning in this context. In Civil War usage, parole had two distinct applications: a prisoner-of-war parole, in which a captured soldier was released on his word of honor not to take up arms until formally exchanged; and an end-of-war parole, in which surrendering Confederate soldiers were issued passes allowing them to return home. The April 13, 1865 date — four days after Appomattox — and the fact that Whicker was already "detailed" to Lynchburg in February (meaning on active assignment there, not imprisoned) both point clearly to the latter: a standard end-of-war discharge parole issued at Lynchburg in the days following the Confederate surrender. There is no "captured" notation in the surviving record, and his hospitalizations are all recorded as medical rather than as capture events. The surviving record does not definitively rule out an earlier capture not documented in the sources available here, but it does not support one either.*

VIRGINIA YEARS: FARMING AND FAITH (TO 1897)

For much of his first half-century, George Whicker was two things at once: a working farmer and a man of God. The tobacco auction records from Bristol, Tennessee in November 1883 show him selling six lots of fillers and two lots of twist wrappers at Winston's Warehouse — prices ranging from $7 to $50 per hundred pounds — evidence that his farm was a real enterprise, not a sideline. He diversified, maintained good stock, and by all appearances understood the commodity market well.

> *The tobacco auction at Bristol in 1883 was among the early seasons of the Virginia bright-leaf boom. Planters who brought quality tobacco could earn meaningful returns, and Whicker's appearance in the public sales records alongside his neighbors places him as a competitive farmer in a community of serious growers.*

His religious life ran alongside the farming from the beginning. In the mid-1870s he was serving as Superintendent of the Sabbath School at Fleenor's School House in Rich Valley — a school that had grown to ninety pupils — and was already recognized as a public speaker of force and originality. When called to address the annual picnic gathering there in October

1875, he was described as advancing ideas that were "new and very striking," with a delivery praised as forcible. By May 1884, he was listed among the vice presidents of the Washington County Sunday School Society, alongside several other Reverends — suggesting his transition from lay leader to ordained minister was either complete or well advanced by that point.

That transition had itself been a denominational journey. Whicker preached for the Methodist church in his district for approximately five years before crossing to the Baptists — a move he made about a year before his brother Ben made the same switch. By March 1892, when a presbytery (a governing body in Presbyterian church polity consisting of ministers and elders representing congregations within a specific district) was convened at Bristol to ordain Ben into the Baptist ministry, George was one of the officiating ministers. The Baptist and Reflector, reporting on the occasion, described George as already "well versed in Methodism, but preaching Baptist doctrine for years" — ready and willing to work. The two brothers were now fully aligned in faith as well as family.

The following years brought George a widening circuit of revival work. In February 1894, he travelled across the state line into Tennessee to assist at Chinquepin Grove Church near Bluff City, a congregation that had grown cold without a regular pastor. He worked for three weeks. The meeting was well attended day and night; thirteen professed their faith in Christ, and one moment in particular moved the congregation — an elderly man of about eighty, hobbling on a cane, came forward to join the church, and the two brothers "embraced him with an exclamation of 'God bless you, brother.'" Many tears were shed. It was the kind of scene that made Whicker's reputation as a revival preacher.

> *Itinerant revival preaching was the lifeblood of rural Baptist church growth in the 1880s and 1890s. A minister who could draw a crowd and secure genuine conversions was highly sought after, and a willingness to travel across state lines to help a struggling congregation spoke to real commitment. Whicker's name appears repeatedly in this role throughout his career.*

CRISIS AND DEPARTURE: 1897

The most turbulent episode of Whicker's recorded life came in August 1897, when he was in his mid-fifties and had been preaching in Washington County, Virginia, for a number of years. On August 18th and 19th, both the Chattanooga Daily Times and The Tennessean carried reports that Rev. George Whicker of Montgomery, Virginia, had left the county under a cloud, his departure attributed by neighbors to improper proposals he had made to a young woman

in the community. The papers described him as a man of family, upwards of fifty years old, now thought to be hiding somewhere in Tennessee.

He did not stay hidden long. By August 29th, the Chattanooga Daily Times reported that Whicker had returned to Washington County and would stand trial on the charges. The state had taken the case in hand, and a hearing that was scheduled for one day was postponed to the next. No further newspaper coverage of any trial outcome has been located in surviving sources.

What happened to George Whicker between the autumn of 1897 and early 1899 is not documented in the sources assembled here. Whatever the legal outcome, the episode clearly marked a turning point. By February 1899, visitors from Virginia arriving first at Ben Whicker's home in Caldwell, Kansas, then continued on to Willow Vale, Oklahoma Territory, to visit George — who was already settled there. The 1905 Olustee Outlook profile would later note that he had come to the country "seven years ago," consistent with an arrival around 1898. Virginia, and the scandal, were behind him.

> *The late 1890s saw substantial migration from the upper South into Oklahoma Territory, opened to settlement beginning in 1889. Greer County in particular attracted families from Virginia and Tennessee. Whether the 1897 episode directly precipitated the Whickers' departure, or whether a westward move was already being contemplated, cannot be determined from surviving sources.*

KANSAS: CALDWELL AND THE RENFROW REVIVALS (1899–1900)

Although George Whicker settled in Oklahoma Territory, not Kansas, his brother Ben's base at Caldwell — a cattle town near the Oklahoma border in Sumner County — became a regular point of connection. From 1899 onward, the Caldwell newspapers documented George's repeated visits to the area, and it is through those pages that some of the clearest pictures of his ministry emerge.

In October 1899, the Caldwell News announced that Ben expected his brother from Willow Vale to come and assist at an upcoming revival meeting near Renfrow, a small town south of Caldwell just across the Oklahoma line. By December, George had arrived. The Caldwell Advance noted simply that "Rev. G. W. Whicker, of Greer, O. T., is visiting his brother, B. F., of this city, and assisting in a protracted meeting near Renfrow" — a meeting that ran through the turn of the year. The Caldwell News for December 7th specified the venue as New Hope school house, with services beginning the third Sunday of the month.

By January 4, 1900, the meeting had moved and expanded. The brothers were now holding services at Fairview Church near Renfrow, where four accessions had been made, and the meeting had transferred again to Hammett's school house, where five conversions had already been reported. It was exactly the kind of sustained, mobile, community-by-community revival work that George had been doing in Virginia and Tennessee, now transplanted to the Kansas–Oklahoma borderlands.

> *Caldwell, Kansas had been a famous cattle-trail terminus in the 1870s and 1880s, the southernmost point on the Chisholm Trail before the open range was fenced. By 1899 it was a quieter agricultural town, close enough to the Oklahoma Territory border that its Baptist congregation and local newspapers had an easy relationship with the communities just to the south. Ben Whicker was a well-established figure there; George's visits were local news.*

The visits to Caldwell were also family occasions. In February 1899, it was Virginia neighbors A. H. Leonard and William Cross who had stopped first at Ben's home before travelling on to see George in Oklahoma — a reminder that the brothers were nodes in a wider network of kin and friends stretching back to Washington County, Virginia. George would continue to travel north to assist Ben's work in the years that followed, though the Caldwell papers appear less frequently in the record after 1900 as the Oklahoma territorial press took over the coverage of his life.

OKLAHOMA TERRITORY: MINISTRY AND FARMING AT WILLOW VALE (1898–1908)

George Whicker arrived in Greer County, Oklahoma Territory, around 1898, settling at Willow Vale — a small community about three miles south of the town of Olustee. He came with something over $1,200 in hand, according to a later newspaper profile, which was enough to establish a farm but not enough to guarantee anything. Over the following decade he built both a prosperous agricultural operation and a recognized ministry, becoming one of the more familiar figures in the life of his adopted community.

The farm came first in the sense that it anchored everything else. He chose a piece of land three miles south of Olustee, sank a windmill to irrigate the garden, planted an orchard of about a hundred young trees — peaches, plums, and other fruits — and put in a diversified field rotation that included Indian corn. By 1905, the Olustee Outlook was running a full profile of him under the headline "Another Good Farmer," noting that his place was now

worth about $5,000, that he had never had a crop failure even in the driest years, and that he had fully demonstrated that the country was good fruit country when worked with proper care and energy. The paper concluded with a line that speaks to how settled he had become: "Bro. Whicker is satisfied, has moved his last time and hence his place is not for sale."

> *Greer County was genuinely frontier territory as late as 1900, barely a decade removed from the land runs that had opened Oklahoma to settlement. Establishing a $5,000 farm — roughly equivalent to over $170,000 today — within seven or eight years of arriving with $1,200 was a real achievement, particularly in a region prone to drought.*

The ministry was equally energetic. He preached across the region — at Willow Vale, at Gyp Hill, at Altus, at Plainview Baptist Church — and participated in the wider Baptist associational life of the territory. He gave talks at Fifth Sunday Meetings on subjects ranging from denominational theology ("Why I am a Baptist") to eschatology ("Where is the Soul from the Time it Leaves the Body until the Resurrection?"). In September 1902, a correspondent reported one of his sermons on the text "Love," from 1 Corinthians 13:13, describing it as a powerful appeal to righteous living that showed "the burning desire of the speaker for the salvation of the lost" — two conversions followed. By September 1904, a meeting at Willow Vale at which he was one of three preachers had produced eleven conversions and a number of letters of transfer into the church.

He was in considerable demand as an officiant for weddings as well. In January 1905 he stopped by the Mangum Weekly Star offices to report that he had just performed his fifth wedding ceremony of the month. The paper noted the milestone with evident amusement.

Beyond the pulpit, he was woven into the social fabric of the community in a way that the local newspapers capture with warmth. He and his wife were in Olustee trading when it came out that Mrs. Whicker had pulled a beet from her garden measuring two feet in length. He went up the creek hunting one December day with his son-in-law John Leonard, his son [George] Smith, and a few others, and they killed a catamount that took seven shots to bring down, plus twenty rabbits and a similar number of birds. Neighbors drove out to the Whicker home three miles south of town to eat peaches. He shot an eleven-pound wild goose at a hundred and fifty yards and the paper called him "a nimrod."

> *The newspaper social notes from the Olustee Outlook in 1904 and 1905 give a rare and vivid sense of what daily life looked like for a settled frontier family. A Baptist preacher who could also*

> *hunt, farm, and host his neighbors for peaches was a particular kind of community figure — respected in the church but comfortable in the world outside it.*

He was also a man of civic conviction, particularly on the question of temperance. In April 1905, he and his son H. W. Whicker both signed a public petition endorsing Sheriff Jasper Nelson's enforcement of the Sabbath day and gambling laws — one of several indications of Whicker's alignment with the reform wing of territorial society. In June 1907, with Oklahoma statehood only months away, he and his neighbor Rev. W. A. Dickey travelled together to Oklahoma City as delegates to the Territorial Anti-Saloon League convention. The movement they were part of would succeed: Oklahoma's constitution, adopted upon statehood in November 1907, included prohibition provisions.

Through all of this, the bonds with his brother Ben and with Caldwell, Kansas, remained alive. The two men continued to collaborate on revival work in the region. A December 1907 newspaper note records George and his family spending a Sunday with the Haley families — B. T. Haley (his son-in-law) and W. H. Haley — a glimpse of the social circle in which the Whicker name intersected with the other families that connect to this research. It was one of the last such notices. The first day of the new year, George Whicker was dead.

DEATH: NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1908

The morning of December 31, 1907, gave no sign of what was coming. George Whicker attended services at the Baptist church in Olustee, appearing to those around him in perfectly good health — free from pain, engaged in the worship, earnest in his prayer. He dined afterwards with his son, then the two of them drove north of town to the farm of Thomas Peterson to collect a plow he needed for his own land. While sitting in the Petersons' house, talking with the family, he suddenly pitched forward from his chair.

Mr. Peterson went to help him. Whicker asked to be left alone for a moment, saying he felt only a little dizzy. Then he was placed on a bed. Transportation was found to bring him to the home of his son Smith in Olustee; from there an ambulance was called. He never regained consciousness. For approximately twenty-four hours he lingered, and at three o'clock Wednesday afternoon — New Year's Day 1908 — he passed away. Physicians attributed his death to a hemorrhage of the brain. He was sixty-four years old.

His funeral was held Thursday, January 9, 1908 afternoon at the Methodist church in Olustee — perhaps reflecting the size of the building more than the denomination. Rev. Humphrey of the Baptist church officiated, assisted by Rev. Stevens of the Methodist church and Bro. Dickey, who had been George's companion at the Anti-Saloon League convention six months earlier. The Caldwell News described the gathering as possibly the greatest number ever congregated at a church in the history of Olustee. Friends came from many parts of the county. His brother Ben, now of Caldwell, Kansas, made the journey south to attend, returning home the following Saturday. A large procession followed the coffin to Willow Vale Cemetery, where he was buried.

> *Cerebral hemorrhage was among the most common causes of sudden death in men of Whicker's age in the early 1900s, and there were virtually no medical interventions available. The pattern — sudden collapse while apparently in good health, request to be left alone, progressive loss of consciousness — is entirely consistent with a cerebral hemorrhage.*

In the days and weeks after the burial, the community expressed its regard through several channels. Mrs. Whicker and the family placed a notice of public thanks in the Olustee Democrat, acknowledging those who had helped during the illness and burial, and quoting Matthew 25:40 ("And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.").

The Olustee Democrat published a fuller memorial on January 30th, describing Whicker as "an able minister of the Baptist faith, forceful in his sermons, earnest in his prayers, and devoted to his faith as he saw it" — a good neighbor, punctual, helpful to the needy, sympathetic to the weak. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Olustee passed formal Resolutions of Respect, recorded on February 8th, noting the loss of an Honorary Member whose courage and devotion to the cause of Prohibition had been unfailing, and directing that a copy of the resolutions be presented to Mrs. Whicker.

SUMMARY

George Washington Whicker was a man of the Civil War generation who remade himself more than once. He began as a Virginia tobacco farmer who also ran a Sabbath School and preached for the Methodists; he converted to the Baptists in the early 1890s and built a reputation as a revival preacher of force and genuine feeling; he survived a public scandal in 1897 that ended

his Virginia life; and he rebuilt himself in Oklahoma Territory as a prosperous farmer, active minister, temperance advocate, and trusted neighbor — a man the local press called a model farmer, and an able minister.

Kansas was not his home, but it was a recurring point of connection. His brother Ben's base at Caldwell meant that the Caldwell papers tracked George's ministry visits to the area in 1899 and 1900, when the two brothers conducted extended revival meetings together near Renfrow, just south of the Kansas line. Those papers offer some of the clearest glimpses of the brothers working in tandem — the way they had been doing, across denominational lines and state borders, since they were young men in Washington County, Virginia.

When he died on New Year's Day 1908, the largest congregation in the memory of Olustee gathered to pay their respects. The WCTU memorialized him formally. His brother came from Kansas to bury him. And the Olustee Democrat closed its tribute with "Requiescat in pace" — rest in peace — a phrase that sat comfortably on a man who had, by the end, earned it.

His connection to the Haley family — documented in the social note recording a shared Sunday visit just days before his death — places him directly within the network of interconnected families that is the subject of this broader genealogical research.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

U.S., Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861–1865 — George W Whicker, Company F, 48th Virginia Infantry; enlisted June 15, 1861; furloughed November 1864; detailed Lynchburg, VA, February 1865; paroled Lynchburg, VA, April 13, 1865 (The Virginia Regimental Histories Series).

Washington County, Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1865 — George W. Whicker and Emma Co. Fleenor, January 29, 1865 (image reviewed).

Newspaper Sources

Bristol News • 5 Oct 1875

Herald and Tribune (Bristol, Tennessee) • 22 Nov 1883

Abingdon Weekly Virginian (Abingdon, Virginia) • 1 May 1884

Baptist and Reflector • 17 Mar 1892 • 15 Feb 1894

Chattanooga Daily Times (Chattanooga, Tennessee) • 19 Aug 1897 • 30 Aug 1897

The Tennessean • 19 Aug 1897

The Caldwell News (Caldwell, Kansas) • 9 Feb 1899 • 19 Oct 1899 • 7 Dec 1899 • 4 Jan 1900 • 16 Jan 1908

The Caldwell Advance (Caldwell, Kansas) • 21 Dec 1899

Mangum Weekly Star • 27 Dec 1900 • 3 Jan 1901 • 11 Sep 1902 • 13 Nov 1902 • 20 Apr 1905

The Mangum Star • 1 Sep 1904

The Olustee Outlook • 17 Nov 1904 • 8 Dec 1904 • 2 Feb 1905 • 23 Feb 1905 • 13 Apr 1905 • 29 Jun 1905 • 6 Jul 1905 • 13 Jul 1905 • 3 May 1907 • 27 Dec 1907 • 8 Feb 1908

The Olustee Democrat • 14 Jun 1907 • 2 Jan 1908 • 9 Jan 1908 • 30 Jan 1908 • 5 Mar 1908 • 5 Aug 1909

Virginia Republican • 23 Jan 1908

The Monroe Journal • 2 Jun 1908

Family and Genealogical Sources

FamilySearch — George Washington Whicker (ID: 2W63-T4K); parents, siblings, spouse Emma Catherine Fleenor (1848–1912), and children confirmed.

EMMA CATHERINE FLEENOR

Wife • Mother • Oklahoma Pioneer • Minister's Companion

VIRGINIA • OKLAHOMA TERRITORY

Also known as: Emma C. Whicker • Mrs. G. W. Whicker • Mrs. Emma C. Whicker • Madam Whicker • Emma Fleenor

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	March 28, 1848, Clear Branch, Washington County, Virginia
DIED	January 28, 1912, Olustee, Jackson County, Oklahoma (age 63)
BURIAL	Olustee, Jackson County, Oklahoma
FATHER	John Henderson (Henry) Fleenor (1798–1865)
MOTHER	Mary Black / Sarah Ann Black (1824–1907)
MARRIED	January 29, 1865, Washington County, Virginia, to Rev. George Washington Whicker
CHILDREN	Joseph Teeter Whicker (1866–1918) Martha Frances Whicker (1868–1947) Mary Virginia Whicker (1870–1963) Lula Estelle Whicker (1873–1932) Maria Catherine "Kate" Whicker (1874–1928) George Smith Whicker (1876–1954) Zachariah Benjamin Whicker (1878–1924) Nannie Belle Whicker (1881–1967) William Thomas Whicker (1883–1883) Minnie Orlena Whicker (1884–1960) Henry Walker Whicker (1886–1953) Myrtle May Whicker (1890–1972)
SIBLINGS	Zachariah Jordan Fleenor (1851–1896) Mary E Fleenor (1853–Deceased) Frances Lavenia Fleenor (1854–1933) Annie Eliza Jane Fleenor (1859–1918)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Emma Catherine Fleenor was born on March 28, 1848, at Clear Branch in Washington County, Virginia — the same Appalachian borderland country, on the Virginia side of the Tennessee line, that produced her future husband and the wider Whicker–Haley network that this research traces. The Fleenors were a settled local family. Her parents, John Henderson (Henry) and Sarah Ann Black, had married about 1845, and Emma was the eldest of five children. Her younger siblings — Zachariah Jordan, Mary E., Frances LuVenia ("Venie"), and Annie Eliza Jane — all remained close to home. Annie Eliza Jane, after not seeing Emma for 12 years, would move to Oklahoma in 1909 to settle near Emma after the death of George.

She joined the Methodist church as a girl and remained, by the testimony of her 1912 obituary, a consistent member of it until her death — a notable detail given that her husband eventually crossed denominational lines from Methodist to Baptist in the early 1890s. Emma did not follow him into the Baptist fold. She kept her own church affiliation throughout a marriage that lasted forty-three years.

> *Washington County, Virginia, in the 1840s was tobacco country, deeply Protestant, and shaped by the steep ridges that separated farming communities from one another. The Fleenor surname is well-attested in the county records from the early nineteenth century onward, and the Fleenor and Whicker families were neighbors in the Rich Valley district where George Whicker grew up. The marriage of Emma to George in 1865 was, in that sense, a community match between two known local families rather than anything unusual.*

MARRIAGE TO A RETURNING SOLDIER (1865)

Emma Fleenor married George Washington Whicker on January 29, 1865, in Washington County, Virginia. The county Register of Marriages for that year records the union: bride aged sixteen, groom aged twenty-one, both of Washington County, the ceremony performed by Rev. A. R. Trickett (the surname appears variously in the record). The Virginia Republican of January 1908, looking back nearly half a century later, would simply note that Rev. Geo. W. Whicker "was married in 1864 to Miss Emma Fleenor, of this county."

The phrase that best captures the moment comes from her own 1912 obituary, written by a lifelong neighbor: she had married "the returning soldier boy." The Civil War ended in April 1865, only weeks after the wedding; whether George had already been mustered out by the January ceremony or returned to her in the months that followed is not specified, but the

obituary writer's phrasing places the marriage squarely in the moment when so many young Virginia couples were starting over after four years of disruption. They built their first family home, the obituary says, "on the hill where the returning spring first smiled."

> *The 1865 marriage entry in the Washington County Register lists both parties as residents of the county, with parents named on both sides. The recovery of southwestern Virginia from the war was slow and uneven, but the early Whicker household — first a farm, then a Sabbath School, then a ministry — followed a pattern common to the more settled families of the district.*

VIRGINIA YEARS: FAMILY, FARM AND FAITH (1865–1897)

For thirty-two years Emma kept house in Washington County, Virginia, while George farmed tobacco and built his religious life around the Rich Valley Sabbath School at Fleenor's School House — named for her own family — and his preaching circuit. Between 1866 and 1890, she bore twelve children: Joseph Teeter (1866), Martha Frances (1868), Mary Virginia (1870), Lula Estelle (1873), Maria Catherine "Kate" (1874), George Smith (1876), Zachariah Benjamin (1878), Nannie Belle (1881), William Thomas (1883, who died in infancy), Minnie Orlena (1884), Henry Walker (1886), and Myrtle May (1890). Eleven of them lived to adulthood — a remarkable record for any nineteenth-century mother, particularly in rural Appalachia.

Her obituarist, writing in 1912, captured this period in a single long sentence whose rhythms speak for themselves: "Some of our earliest recollections, aside from our own home, are associated with her and hers — far away in the land of the mountains. Commencing with the time she married the returning soldier boy, when they built their first family home up on the hill where the returning spring first smiled, when her first born and we went to the old log school-house among the giant oaks, to the time our home was invaded by death and left forever desolate, even through the fifteen years we have lived side by side in Oklahoma, this old friend of ours has been in a measure a part of the warp and woof of our life. Births, deaths, weddings, funerals; joys and sorrows all are mingled more or less." That voice, of a neighbor who had grown up with her, gives a sharper picture of the texture of Emma's life than any official record.

> *The 1870s and 1880s social-column record from the Bristol and Abingdon newspapers shows George active in tobacco auctions, Sabbath School leadership and, by the mid-1880s, the ordained Methodist ministry. Emma's name appears more rarely in print, as was the convention — wives of public men were typically mentioned only on the occasion of births, weddings, or church anniversaries*

> *— but the children themselves are the evidence of her labor: a child roughly every two years for a quarter-century, all but one carried to adulthood.*

THE DEED OF OCTOBER 1897

A document survives that places Emma at the center of a significant family transaction in the very months when her husband's Virginia life was unravelling. On October 23, 1897, a deed was executed between Emma C. Whicker and George W. Whicker of the first part and M. V. Sproles and C. W. Sproles of the second part, conveying four tracts of Washington County land — totaling roughly 88 acres on and adjoining Walker's Mountain — for $1,000 ($500 in hand, $500 in two notes of $250 each, payable to Emma C. Whicker and bearing interest at six per cent). The deed was acknowledged before W. L. Cunningham, Justice of the Peace, on the same day, and recorded at the Washington County clerk's office on February 2, 1900.

The structure of the transaction is notable. The two purchase-money notes were made payable to Emma specifically, not to the couple jointly — a legal arrangement that secured her personal claim to the unpaid balance. The deed came only weeks after the August 1897 newspaper reports that George had left Washington County under a cloud of accusation, and only a few months before the family relocated to Oklahoma Territory. Whether the timing was coincidental, planned, or directly responsive to the events of that summer cannot be determined from the surviving record, but the consolidation of the Virginia land into Emma's name — and then its sale — fits a recognizable pattern of family reorganization in advance of a major move.

> *Married women in Virginia in 1897 could hold property and execute deeds in their own right under the state's married women's property reforms of the post-bellum period, which is why Emma's name appears as a principal party rather than merely as her husband's wife. The fact that the unpaid purchase-money notes ran specifically to Emma suggests she — or those advising the family — wanted those funds protected for her use.*

REMOVAL TO OKLAHOMA TERRITORY (1897)

Emma's 1912 obituary states the move plainly: "They moved to Oklahoma in 1897 and bought a place 3 miles south of Olustee, where they lived until the death of Mr. Whicker." That dating places the family's arrival immediately after the Virginia land transaction and matches the 1905 Olustee Outlook profile of George, which had said he came to the country "seven years ago" with something over $1,200 in hand. Emma was forty-nine years old; her youngest child Myrtle

was seven. She would spend the remaining fifteen years of her life on the same Greer County (later Jackson County) farm three miles south of Olustee.

The 1900 family portrait — a striking photograph annotated "G. W. Whicker Family" and dated to that year — shows the Whicker household assembled in front of a clapboard frame house, three generations standing and seated together: George with his beard and dark suit, Emma seated beside him in dark mourning-style dress with white collar, surrounded by their grown sons and daughters, the younger children, and at least one infant grandchild. It is clearest visual record of the family in its Oklahoma years.

> *Greer County had been transferred from Texas to Oklahoma Territory by the U.S. Supreme Court only in 1896, and was being actively settled when the Whickers arrived. Land was relatively cheap, the climate suited tobacco, fruit, and grain, and a steady stream of Virginia and Tennessee families were following one another west. By 1907, when Oklahoma achieved statehood, Greer County had been subdivided into Greer, Jackson, and Harmon Counties; Olustee fell into Jackson County, which is why Emma's 1912 death certificate is filed there rather than at Greer.*

OLUSTEE YEARS: HOUSEHOLD AND HOSPITALITY (1897–1908)

In the years on the Olustee farm, Emma appears in the Olustee Outlook and the Olustee Democrat in the way that ministers' wives typically did — as half of the social unit "Rev. G. W. Whicker and wife" — and occasionally as a personality in her own right. The November 1904 Outlook captured her best: "Rev. G. W. Whicker and wife were in town trading Monday. Mrs. Whicker pulled from her garden some days ago a beet that measured two feet in length and three inches around at the little end. They neglected to weigh it. This beet can't be beat. Bro. Whicker has a fine garden of vegetables which he irrigates from his wind mill." The note tells more about the household than its few lines suggest: a productive irrigated garden, a husband who farmed it, a wife who was known by name to the editor, and a community small enough that a remarkable beet was news.

She was also a hostess of recognized standing. The Olustee Outlook's account of daughter Myrtle's May 1908 wedding to W. T. Clark — reprinted as far away as The Monroe Journal in North Carolina — describes the gathering at the Whicker home south of town: a charming bride in soft white silk, a large company of friends and relatives, and "an elegant dinner, of the sort which Madam Whicker and her daughters are justly famed for preparing." The honorific

"Madam Whicker" appears nowhere else in the record I have, but it is the kind of phrase a local newspaper used for the matriarch of an established household.

She kept the household at the center of a wide kin network. In July 1905, she travelled with George and the youngest daughter Myrtle to visit Rev. and Mrs. W. A. Dickey — George's temperance-cause collaborator. In December 1907, just weeks before George's sudden death, the family spent a Sunday with the B. T. Haley and W. H. Haley families — the visit that placed her son-in-law's name (B. T. Haley had married daughter Kate in 1897) firmly into the cluster of intermarried Virginia families now resettled in Greer County. The Caldwell, Kansas, newspapers tracked similar visits in the opposite direction, as George travelled north to assist his brother B. F. Whicker in revival meetings.

> *The honorific "Madam Whicker" in the 1908 Olustee Outlook wedding account is unusual enough to be worth noting. American newspapers of the period used the word sparingly, typically for older women of established social position; its application to Emma — a Baptist minister's wife on a farm three miles south of a small Oklahoma town — suggests that within Olustee at least, she was understood as a person of standing.*

WIDOWHOOD (1908–1912)

George Washington Whicker died suddenly on New Year's Day 1908, struck down by a cerebral hemorrhage at the age of sixty-four. Emma was at his bedside, along with all but three of their twelve children. The Olustee Democrat for January 9, 1908, carried her family's public thanks: "We desire to express our heartfelt thanks to the many friends who so kindly assisted us during the sickness and burial of our husband and father. May they be rewarded of Him who said: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me. Yours truly, Mrs. G. W. Whicker and family."

George's will, dated 1890 and filed for probate in Jackson County on January 17, 1908, named Emma both the principal beneficiary and the executor. The Altus Times of January 23, 1908 — under the headline "Eleven Whickers" — set out its provisions: $5 each to ten of the surviving children (Joe T., G. S., Z. B., H. Walker and Myrtle May Whicker; Martha Leonard, Lulu S. Williams, Catharine Haley, Jennie Montgomery, Nannie Belle Leonard, and Minnie E. Bivins), with all the rest and residue of his property, both real and personal, going to Emma during her lifetime, and at her death to the two youngest, H. Walker and Myrtle May. Emma was appointed administratrix with will annexed on February 8, 1908.

She managed the estate competently. Notice to creditors was published in February 1908; her final account was filed in July 1909; and the Olustee Democrat of August 5, 1909 carried the County Court's formal notice that her settlement would be heard at the Altus courthouse on Saturday, August 14, 1909. The estate was duly settled.

During this period Emma maintained the Olustee farm and continued the household. In May 1908, daughter Myrtle was married from the home — Rev. W. A. Dickey officiating, Emma presiding over the wedding dinner. In March 1909, the Bristol Herald Courier noted that her sister Mrs. R. P. Warren (Annie Eliza Jane) and family had arrived from Imboden, Virginia, on February 21st to settle permanently in Olustee — "Mrs. Warren will visit her sister, Mrs. Emma C. Whicker, whom she has not seen for twelve years." The same column recorded the arrival, three weeks earlier, of Mrs. Martha F. Leonard and family of Castlewood, Virginia (Martha was Emma's eldest daughter), come to make their future home. The Whicker compound at Olustee was, in those years, a destination for kin moving west.

> *The naming pattern in George's will — five dollars to each of ten older children, with the residue going first to Emma for her lifetime and then to the two youngest at her death — was a standard mechanism in nineteenth-century rural America for protecting a widow's support while still providing for minor children. H. Walker was twenty-one and Myrtle just seventeen at the time the will was probated; they were the children George still felt responsible for. The Altus Times' headline "Eleven Whickers," and its editorial aside that George was "evidently a man after President Roosevelt's own heart" (a wry nod to Roosevelt's well-known views on large families), captures something of how the community read the will.*

DEATH: JANUARY 28, 1912

Emma's health appears to have declined in the years after George's death. At some point — the obituary places it shortly before her final illness — she left the farm south of Olustee and moved into town with her daughter, Mrs. Clark (Myrtle May Whicker Clark). She died at Myrtle's home in Olustee on Sunday, January 28, 1912. She was sixty-three years, ten months, and one day old.

Her death certificate, filed with the Oklahoma State Board of Health in Jackson County (Registered No. 2496), records the cause of death as diabetes, with Dr. Crow of Olustee certifying that he had attended her from February 7th to February 12th, 1912 — dates which conflict with the obituary's January 28th. The discrepancy is unexplained; the gravestone in Olustee Cemetery records the death as January 28, 1912, and the obituary, published in The

Olustee Democrat on February 1, 1912, confirms a Sunday death. The informant on the death certificate was her son G. S. (George Smith) Whicker of Olustee. Her father is recorded on the certificate as "Henry Fleener" and her mother as "Mary Black," both of Virginia; her occupation as "housewife"; and her marital status as widowed.

Her funeral was held shortly after her death. Rev. J. E. Martin, pastor of the Methodist Church — her own denomination throughout her life — preached "a touching and pertinent funeral sermon," and she was buried beside her husband in the Olustee cemetery. The Olustee Democrat's obituary, evidently written by a Virginia-born neighbor who had known her for nearly fifty years, closed with the lines that capture her better than any vital record: "That she was a Christian is evident from the impress on her children, that she was a good wife was evident from the devotion of her husband, that she was a good neighbor is evident from the host of friends that mourn her loss. That she was ready and expecting the summons was evident from her conversation. She has passed into the morning where she has renewed the associations broken here."

> *The date conflict between the death certificate (which seems to give an attendance window in February) and the obituary and gravestone (January 28th) most likely reflects a clerical confusion in completing the certificate — the form was filed on "2/13/1912," which is consistent with a delayed filing rather than with a February death. Diabetes in 1912 was, in practical terms, untreatable: insulin would not become clinically available until 1922. A diabetic patient of Emma's age would have been managed only through diet, and the disease typically ran its course over months to a year or two.*

SUMMARY

Emma Catherine Fleenor was a Washington County, Virginia, girl who married a returning soldier in January 1865, bore him twelve children over the next twenty-five years, raised eleven of them to adulthood, and held a household together through her husband's movement from Methodist lay preaching to Baptist ordination, through a public scandal that drove the family from Virginia in 1897, and through the rebuilding of their lives on a Greer County farm three miles south of Olustee, Oklahoma. She kept her own Methodist church membership all her life. She managed a productive irrigated garden, prepared the kind of wedding dinners for which she and her daughters were locally famed, served as executor of her husband's estate after his sudden death in 1908, and drew her widowed sister and her eldest married daughter

to Olustee in the years that followed. She died of diabetes in 1912 at sixty-three, four years and four weeks after George, and was buried beside him.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Emma Whicker, Oklahoma State Board of Health, Jackson County; Registered No. 2496; date of death February 12, 1912 (as certified; conflicts with obituary and gravestone date of January 28, 1912); cause: diabetes; physician Dr. Crow, Olustee; informant: G. S. Whicker, Olustee; filed February 13, 1912.

Washington County, Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1865 — George W. Whicker and Emma C. Fleenor, January 29, 1865.

Washington County, Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1897 — entries adjacent to Whicker family.

Washington County, Virginia, Deed Book — Whicker to Sproles, four tracts on and adjoining Walker's Mountain, $1,000; deed dated October 23, 1897, recorded February 2, 1900; W. L. Cunningham, J.P.

Last Will and Testament of G. W. Whicker — dated 1890; filed for probate, Jackson County, Oklahoma, January 17, 1908; Emma C. Whicker named executrix.

Jackson County, Oklahoma, marriage record No. 96 — W. P. Clark and Myrtle M. Whicker, May 17, 1908, Rev. W. A. Dickey officiating.

Newspaper Sources

The Olustee Outlook (Olustee, Oklahoma) • 17 Nov 1904 (Mrs. Whicker's two-foot beet) • 13 Jul 1905 (visit to Rev. and Mrs. W. A. Dickey) • 21 May 1908 (Myrtle May Whicker–W. T. Clark wedding, reprinted Monroe Journal 2 Jun 1908)

The Olustee Democrat (Olustee, Oklahoma) • 9 Jan 1908 (family's public thanks) • 28 May 1908 (Clark–Whicker wedding) • 5 Aug 1909 (Notice of Settlement of Account, estate of G. W. Whicker, Emma C. Whicker administratrix) • 1 Feb 1912 (obituary, "Mrs. Emma C. Whicker")

The Altus Times (Altus, Oklahoma) • 23 Jan 1908 ("Eleven Whickers", probate of G. W. Whicker's will)

Virginia Republican (Bristol, Virginia) • 23 Jan 1908 (death notice, Rev. Geo. W. Whicker; reference to 1864/1865 marriage to Emma Fleenor)

Bristol Herald Courier (Bristol, Virginia) • 2 Mar 1909 (Mrs. R. P. Warren and family of Imboden arrive at Olustee to settle near her sister Mrs. Emma C. Whicker; also Mrs. Martha F. Leonard family from Castlewood)

The Caldwell News (Caldwell, Kansas) • 3 Jan 1901 (Whicker family wedding, Willowvale, Greer County, O. T. — note providing context for the Whicker family's social world in Oklahoma)

Family and Genealogical Sources

Gravestone photograph — Emma C. Whicker, Born Mar. 28, 1848, Died Jan. 28, 1912 (Olustee Cemetery, family collection).

Family portrait photograph — "G. W. Whicker Family, 1900" (family collection).

FamilySearch family tree records — Emma Catherine Fleenor (LCY9-8WN); George Washington Whicker (2W63-T4K); parents John Henderson Fleenor (L8M4-VXJ) and Sarah Ann Black (2H29-N1M); siblings and children as listed.

Cross-reference — George Washington Whicker Biography (this project), for parallel detail on the 1865 marriage, the 1897 Virginia departure, the Olustee farm and ministry, and the New Year's Day 1908 death.

SAMUEL MELBOURNE BURNETT

School Teacher • Justice of the Peace

NEW BRUNSWICK

Also known as: S. M. Burnett • Samuel Burnett

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	October 1, 1858, Corn Hill, Kings, New Brunswick, Canada
DIED	May 21, 1917, Petitcodiac, New Brunswick, Canada (age 58)
BURIAL	United Baptist Cemetery, Petitcodiac, New Brunswick
FATHER	William Elias Burnett (1826–1904)
MOTHER	Margaret Amelia Tamlyn (1835–1895)
MARRIED	February 14, 1885, to Margaret (Maggie) Jane Brown, New Brunswick, Canada
CHILDREN	Melbourne Leroy Burnett (1885–1937) Claude Armour Burnett (1889–1955) John Elias Burnett (1890–1963) Samuel Lloyd Burnett (1892–1938) Margaret "Maggie" Morton Burnett (1896–1899) James Alexander Burnett (1898–1983) Mary Fidelia Burnett (1901–1999) Laura Berniece Burnett (1903–1992)
SIBLINGS	Gertrude Malinda Burnett (1860–1921) Charles Wesley Burnett (1861–1862) Roland Leander Burnett (1863–1887) John Parker Burnett (1865–1905) Edgar William Burnett (1871–1960) Lloyd Wellington Burnett (1874–1926)

> *Note on name variants: The death certificate of his son Melbourne L. Burnett (Oregon, 1937) gives the father's name simply as "Samuel Burnett" — the middle name Melbourne is confirmed by the handwritten genealogical note accompanying a surviving portrait photograph. Newspaper sources consistently use "S. M. Burnett" in professional contexts.*

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Samuel Melbourne Burnett was born in the autumn of 1858 in rural New Brunswick, in the farming and timber country that produced many of the province's school teachers and local civic figures. The family portrait photograph, annotated by a later hand, confirms his full name as Samuel Melbourne Burnett and his birthdate as October 1, 1858.

He came of age in a province where the school system was expanding rapidly and teachers were drawn from the educated sons of farming and professional families. The young man who would spend his adult life running classrooms was, in that sense, representative of his generation and place. The trail of teaching assignments that begins in 1894 — Robinson Settlement, then the village of Petitcodiac itself — suggests he had been at the work for some years before newspaper records pick him up.

In February 1885, at the residence of the bride's parents in Cornhill, New Brunswick, he married Margaret J. Brown, eldest daughter of John W. Brown of the parish of Havelock. Together they would raise seven children: two daughters, Mary and Laura; and five sons, Claude, Melbourne, Samuel, John, and James, several of whom had moved considerable distances from New Brunswick by the time their father died in 1917.

> *New Brunswick's rural school teaching culture in the late nineteenth century drew on a pool of men who combined modest academic credentials with the standing needed to command a community's respect. Teachers in small-town New Brunswick often held multiple civic roles simultaneously, and the pattern of Burnett's later career — teacher, justice of the peace, lodge officer — is typical of that world.*

TEACHING CAREER: PETITCODIAC, NEW BRUNSWICK (1894–1917)

The earliest newspaper record of Samuel Burnett's professional life comes from September 1894, when The Telegraph-Journal noted that he was teaching in Robinson Settlement and had purchased the Keith property, intending to move into the Petitcodiac village and pursue his studies "with a view to advancement of class." The phrasing suggests a man still actively developing his credentials even as he was already in the classroom.

By July 1896, he was listed in the Petitcodiac school roster as taking charge of the intermediate department. In August 1902, the Moncton Transcript confirmed him again as the intermediate teacher when schools resumed. A brief notice from November 1913 captured a more human

moment: the paper noted that "Mr. S. M. Burnett, the popular school teacher, has been ill for a few days" and that his department had been closed as a result. By September 1915, the Telegraph-Journal was recording that Claude Burnett, wife and infant, of Portland, Maine, were visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel.

He appears to have held the intermediate teaching position at Petitcodiac for the better part of two decades, a span that gives him the character of an institution within the village school. That kind of continuity was not always the norm; teachers moved frequently in this period, and a man who stayed was noticed.

> *Petitcodiac, in Kings County on the Petitcodiac River, was a market-town community with railway access that gave it a slightly more prosperous and connected character than many comparable New Brunswick villages. Its school drew children from a wide rural catchment, and a stable intermediate teacher was a civic asset. The 1913 notice that his department was closed when he fell ill speaks to the degree to which the school's operation depended on him personally.*

CIVIC LIFE: JUSTICE OF THE PEACE AND LODGE SERVICE (1895–1912)

Teaching was not the whole of Burnett's public life. In March 1895, the Telegraph-Journal carried a notice of provincial appointments listing Samuel Burnett, Petitcodiac, as one of two newly commissioned justices of the peace for Westmorland County. The appointment placed him in a formal civic role alongside his teaching — a pattern common enough for schoolmasters who were trusted figures in their communities.

He was also a committed member of Phoenix Lodge, L.O.L. No. 67 (later listed as No. 677), the Petitcodiac branch of the Loyal Orange Lodge. The lodge records span the full period of his active life in the village. In December 1906, he was listed as 1st Lecturer in the slate of officers for the ensuing year. By December 1911, he had risen to Deputy Master, serving alongside Worshipful Master Harry Waterbury, with the installation performed by Past Master H. W. Church. In December 1912, he was elected Worshipful Master (W.M.) — the lodge's highest office — for the year 1913. The reporter who covered the installation that year wrote that the lodge's speech from the new W.M. was "logical and impressive" and expressed confidence that Phoenix Lodge had made no mistake in its choice.

> *The Loyal Orange Lodge was one of the principal Protestant fraternal organizations in New Brunswick, with deep roots in the province's Irish and Scottish Protestant communities. Service as*

> *Worshipful Master was a mark of standing within that network. That Samuel rose to that position in 1912–1913, while still active as a schoolteacher, confirms his standing in the Petitcodiac community.*

FAMILY LIFE AND COMMUNITY PRESENCE

The newspaper social columns of Petitcodiac occasionally open a window onto Burnett as a family man rather than a public figure. The most vivid of these moments is an October 1894 item in both The Times-Transcript and the Telegraph-Journal, reporting that his nine-year-old son (Melbourne), born in 1885 — had met with a serious accident while playing near the I.C.R. (Intercolonial Railroad) station. The boy fell against the platform and suffered serious internal injuries; inflammation of the kidneys and bowels had set in, and the physician held only slight hopes of recovery. The item was urgent enough to be telegraphed to Moncton as special news. Melbourne obviously survived (he passed away in 1937).

By 1915, children were returning to visit. The Telegraph-Journal's Petitcodiac Notes for September of that year record Claude Burnett, his wife, and their infant — identified as guests of "his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Burnett." The sons Melbourne and Samuel had by then moved to Peace River, in the Alberta frontier; Claude, John, and James were in Brownville, Maine.

DEATH: MAY 21, 1917

On Sunday evening, May 20, 1917, Samuel Burnett suffered a sudden paralytic stroke at his home in Petitcodiac. The Moncton Transcript's first report, published Tuesday, May 22nd, noted that he "still lies critically ill at his home" and that Dr. Flemming had been quickly summoned but held very little hope of recovery. The family, having returned from church, had found him lying in an unconscious state.

He never recovered. According to The Times-Transcript's obituary, he gradually sank until the end came at twelve o'clock Monday night. He was fifty-eight years old and had been a respected citizen of Petitcodiac for a number of years.

His funeral was held Wednesday afternoon, May 26th — the Moncton Transcript noted that notwithstanding a downpour of rain, it was very largely attended. The service was conducted by Rev. M. Addison, pastor of the Baptist Church, assisted by Rev. Mr. Gregg of the Methodist Church. Both the Baptist and Methodist choirs were in attendance. The floral offerings were

described as beautiful: a pillow from the family, a large wreath from his former school pupils, a spray from the Methodist choir, and several smaller pieces. He was buried in the cemetery at Petitcodiac.

The three sons from Brownville, Maine — Claude, John, and James — arrived home to attend the funeral. Melbourne and Samuel, then at Peace River, did not make it in time.

> *The cause of death on his son Melbourne's Oregon death certificate (1937) was coronary thrombosis with hypertension as a contributing cause — a reminder that cardiovascular illness ran in the family. The paralytic stroke that killed Samuel is consistent with hypertensive cerebrovascular disease, the same broad category that would claim his son two decades later.*

NOTE ON DEATH CERTIFICATE (OREGON, 1937)

The death certificate for Melbourne L. Burnett, filed in Multnomah County, Oregon, in October 1937, is the only formal vital record yet located that directly references Samuel Burnett. It gives the father's name as "Samuel Burnett" (no middle name), birthplace as "Petitcodiac, N.B., Canada," and the mother's maiden name as "Margaret Brown." The informant is listed as Daisy Burnett of Biggs, Oregon — Melbourne's wife.

SUMMARY

Samuel Melbourne Burnett was the kind of man a small New Brunswick town in the late nineteenth century depended upon without fully remarking on: a schoolteacher of two decades' standing, a Justice of the Peace, a Worshipful Master of the local Orange Lodge, a husband and father of seven children. His public record is built from the quiet accumulations of newspaper columns — school rosters, lodge election lists, an occasional social note. The one moment of genuine drama the newspapers capture — the 1894 report that his young son (Melbourne) had been gravely injured near the railway station — ends without recorded resolution, though the boy survived.

He died in May 1917 at fifty-eight, struck down by a paralytic stroke that gave his family no time to prepare. The rain came down on his funeral and the people of Petitcodiac came out anyway. His former pupils sent a wreath. The Baptist and Methodist choirs — two denominations united for the occasion — sang for him. The three sons who could make it came from Maine; Melbourne and Samuel, far away at Peace River, Alberta, could not.

His connection to the Burnett/Propst/Haley family network runs through his son Melbourne L. Burnett, telegraph operator and railway agent, who eventually settled in Biggs, Oregon, and whose wife Daisy May Propst Burnett served as informant on Melbourne's 1937 death certificate — the document that preserves Samuel's name for this research.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Melbourne L. Burnett, State of Oregon, Multnomah County; State Registered No. 5364; Local Registered No. 5643; principal cause: coronary thrombosis; informant: Daisy Burnett, Biggs, Oregon; filed 25 Oct 1937.

Newspaper Sources

Telegraph-Journal (Saint John, New Brunswick) • 14 Sep 1894 • 30 Oct 1894 • 29 Mar 1895 • 22 Sep 1915 • 28 May 1917

The Times-Transcript (Moncton, New Brunswick) • 18 Feb 1885 • 30 Oct 1894 • 12 Jan 1910 • 18 Dec 1911 • 4 Dec 1912 • 5 Nov 1913 • 22 May 1917 • 26 May 1917

The Moncton Transcript • 29 Aug 1902 • 18 Dec 1906 • 22 May 1917 • 26 May 1917

Family and Genealogical Sources

Family portrait photograph — with handwritten annotation: "Samuel Melbourne Burnett, b. 10/1/1858 Hillsgrove, NB Ca., d. 5/21/1917 Petitcodiac, NB Ca., m. 2/14/1885 Cornhill, NB Ca., Margaret Jane Brown" (family collection).

MARGARET JANE BROWN

Wife • Mother

NEW BRUNSWICK • MAINE • MICHIGAN • OHIO

Also known as: Margaret / Maggie J. Brown • Margaret / Maggie Burnett • Mrs. S. M. Burnett • Mrs. Samuel Burnett

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	January 8, 1863, Corn Hill, Kings County, New Brunswick, Canada
DIED	October 11, 1942, Green Township, Hamilton County, Ohio (age 79)
BURIAL	United Baptist Cemetery, Petitcodiac, New Brunswick, Canada (alongside her husband Samuel)
FATHER	John W. Brown (1822–1886)
MOTHER	Margaret Morton (1827–1899)
MARRIED	February 14, 1885, at residence of bride's parents, Corn Hill, NB, to Samuel Melbourne Burnett (1858–1917)
CHILDREN	Melbourne Leroy Burnett (1885–1937) Claude Armour Burnett, Sr. (1889–1955) John Elias Burnett (1890–1963) Samuel Lloyd Burnett (1892–1938) Margaret "Maggie" Morton Burnett (1896–1899) James Alexander Burnett (1898–1983) Mary Fidelia Burnett (1901–1999) Laura Berniece Burnett (1903–1992)
SIBLINGS	Mary Brown (1852–Deceased) John William Brown (1859–1939) James Henry Brown (1860–1940) Alexander Morton Brown (1861–1926) Margaret Jane Brown (1863–1942) Fidelia Elizabeth Brown (1864–Deceased) Robert Armour Brown Sr. (1866–1931) Hugh M Brown (1867–1911) Agnes Brown (1869–1873) Ada G Brown (1877–Deceased)

> *Note on birth year: the Burnett gravestone at Petitcodiac records Margaret's birth as 1862, but her 1942 Ohio death certificate, her stated age in the 1942 obituaries (79), and the FamilySearch family record all give 1863 — and the death certificate is specific to January 8, 1863. The gravestone year is most likely a stonecutter's error.*

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Margaret Jane Brown was born on January 8, 1863, in the rural community of Corn Hill, in the parish of Havelock, Kings County, New Brunswick. Her parents — John W. Brown and Margaret Morton — had come from Loudoun, Ayrshire, Scotland, after their May 1845 marriage there, and were among the early settlers of the Corn Hill district. The Telegraph-Journal would later describe them, at the time of Margaret's death, as Scottish-born pioneers of the place.

She grew up in a large and locally prominent Scottish-Canadian family. Her father John W. Brown farmed the Corn Hill homestead and is described in the 1899 burial notice for his widow as having come out from Scotland with her some fifty years earlier. Margaret Morton Brown bore eleven children, of whom Margaret was the sixth and the eldest of the surviving daughters at the time of her marriage. The family produced businessmen, farmers, and at least two well-known cheese makers — her older brother John W. Brown, Jr. (1858–1939), who took over the Corn Hill homestead, and James Henry Brown (1860–1940), who built the first cheese factory at Corn Hill and was, in his lifetime, a widely-known maker in the trade.

> *Corn Hill, in the parish of Havelock, was a Scottish settlement community of mixed Presbyterian and Baptist conviction. Its families intermarried widely with the neighboring Petitcodiac district, where the railway and the schools gave the larger community its institutional center. The Browns of Corn Hill were one of the larger and more locally established families — five of Margaret's brothers and several of her sisters' families would still be living in or near Corn Hill at the time of her death four decades after she had left the country.*

MARRIAGE TO SAMUEL MELBOURNE BURNETT (1885)

On Saturday, February 14, 1885, Margaret — then twenty-two and identified in the marriage notice as the eldest daughter of John Brown, Esq., of the parish of Havelock — married Samuel Melbourne Burnett, then twenty-six and listed as of the parish of Salisbury. The ceremony was performed at the residence of the bride's parents by the Rev. A. C. Thompson, and was announced in the Times-Transcript four days later under the simple heading

"Married." Samuel, who had been teaching in the local schools and was already developing the reputation that would carry him to the principalship of Petitcodiac High School, was at the start of the career that would define their joint life. Margaret, who had grown up at Corn Hill, was crossing the parish line into Salisbury and, before long, into Petitcodiac itself.

The marriage would last thirty-two years and produce eight children. The seven children of the marriage who reached adulthood were Melbourne Leroy (b. 1885), Claude Armour (b. 1889), John Elias (b. 1890), Samuel Lloyd (b. 1892), James Alexander (b. 1898), Mary Fidelia (b. 1901), and Laura Berniece (b. 1903). A second daughter, Maggie Morton Burnett, named for her mother and grandmother, was born in 1896 and died in 1899 at the age of three.

> *The 1885 marriage announcement is one of the few surviving direct records of Margaret's wedding. Her identification there as "eldest daughter of John Brown, Esq." — the title "Esquire" being a New Brunswick honorific reserved for men of local standing, often Justices of the Peace or substantial property holders — places the Brown household at the upper end of Corn Hill society.*

LIFE IN PETITCODIAC (1885–1917)

For the thirty-two years of her marriage, Margaret's life ran in close parallel to her husband's career as a Petitcodiac schoolteacher and — in due course — principal. The newspaper record for her in those years is sparse, which is typical of the period for a married woman in a small community: she appears chiefly in social notes, in connection with visits to and from family, and as a wife and mother in the orbit of a publicly active husband.

Family visits between Corn Hill and Petitcodiac were a regular feature. In July 1905, the Moncton Transcript noted that "Mrs. Samuel Burnett and family, who have been visiting Mr. and Mrs. James H. Brown, have returned to their home at Petitcodiac" — a typical summer return from her brother's home at Corn Hill. A decade later, in September 1915, the Telegraph-Journal recorded Claude Burnett, his wife, and their infant arriving from Portland, Maine, as guests of his parents — the eldest of the surviving Maine-bound sons coming home with the next generation.

Margaret's life as a mother spanned, by 1917, the full arc from infants to grown men with families of their own: her eldest, Melbourne, was thirty-one and working as a telegraph operator at Peace River, Alberta; Samuel Lloyd had followed him there; Claude, John, and James were in Maine; Mary and Laura were still at home. The household at Petitcodiac was, in

those last years before her widowhood, comparatively quiet — the boys away, the girls of school age.

> *Petitcodiac in the early twentieth century was a Kings County market town with a small but stable school system. Samuel Burnett's standing as the intermediate-department teacher and then principal of the village school gave the family local prominence. As his wife, Margaret would have occupied the social position that came with it — visible at the school's public functions, expected at the Baptist church, and known to virtually everyone in the village by name.*

WIDOWHOOD: THE DEATH OF SAMUEL (MAY 1917)

On Sunday evening, May 20, 1917, the Burnett household returned from church to find Samuel collapsed in an unconscious state. He had suffered a paralytic stroke. Dr. Flemming was summoned quickly, but held little hope of recovery. Samuel sank gradually through Monday and died at twelve o'clock that night, at age fifty-eight. The Times-Transcript's obituary, published May 26th, observed that he was "a highly respected citizen of this place for a number of years" and left to mourn him "a sorrowing wife, five sons, and two daughters." Of the sons, only Claude, John, and James — the three at Brownville, Maine — reached home for the funeral. Melbourne and Samuel Lloyd, then at Peace River, did not arrive in time.

The funeral was held Wednesday afternoon, May 26th. The Moncton Transcript noted that notwithstanding a downpour of rain, it was very largely attended, and that the floral offerings included a pillow from the family and a large wreath from Samuel's former school pupils. He was buried in the Petitcodiac cemetery. Margaret, at fifty-four, was a widow with two daughters at home, the eldest twelve and the younger nine, and a household to reorder.

> *Samuel Burnett's death came at the end of a hard spring. Her son Melbourne, in Peace River, had buried his infant son Melbourne Armour Burnett the previous month (April 12, 1917); the surviving sources do not record whether Margaret had been able to make the long journey west for that funeral. Melbourne and his brother Samuel Lloyd, both at Peace River, did not reach Petitcodiac in time for their father's funeral six weeks later — only the three Maine sons (Claude, John, and James) were able to get home. The compressed sequence — grandchild's death in April, husband's death in May — marked the start of her widowhood.*

YEARS IN MAINE AND BEYOND (1917–C. 1930)

Within months of Samuel's death, Margaret had begun what would become her permanent pattern: making her home with her grown children, principally in Maine, with returning visits

to Petitcodiac and Corn Hill. The Moncton Transcript noted in August 1918 that "Mrs. Margaret Burnett and her daughter Laura, formerly of Petitcodiac, who have been residing during the past year in Maine, are visiting friends here" — a year, then, after Samuel's death, the move out of New Brunswick had already been made. The St. John Standard's Salisbury notes for late June of the same year recorded Margaret and Laura visiting Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Brown (Robert Armour Brown).

An immigration manifest from Jackman, Maine, dated July 12, 1921, documents one of her crossings: Margaret J. Burnett, age 58, female, English-speaking and of Scotch nationality, last permanent residence Petitcodiac, NB, final destination Brownville Junction, Maine, joining her son John. The form gives her height as five feet five inches and her eyes as grey, and notes her hair color simply as that of an older woman. She was crossing into the United States to live with John, who farmed and worked in the small Piscataquis County town that became one of her principal homes in the 1920s.

She kept her connection to Corn Hill alive throughout these years. A Moncton Transcript Cornhill Notes item from September 1926 recorded that "Mr. and Mrs. John Burnett and daughter and Mrs. Margaret Burnett, of Maine, were week-end guests of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Brown" — her son John, his wife and daughter, accompanying their grandmother to the homestead of her elder brother John, who would live until 1939. The Brown family at Corn Hill remained the magnetic north of Margaret's New Brunswick life, even as her physical residence drifted south.

> *Margaret's three brothers — John W. Brown (d. 1939), James Henry Brown (d. 1940), and the others — outlived her in some cases and predeceased her in others. The obituaries of John W. and James Henry, both published in 1939 and 1940, identify her as "Mrs. Margaret Burnett, Cincinnati, Ohio" — evidence that by the late 1930s she had moved from Maine to Ohio, where her daughter Laura was settled.*

A surviving family photograph, taken on the porch of a small frame house, identifies five members of the extended family together: Ellen Robb Nickerson (mother of Daisy May Propst Burnett), Melbourne Leroy Burnett (Margaret's eldest son), Margaret Jane Brown herself, Margaret Ellen Burnett (her infant granddaughter, named for her), and Daisy May Propst (Melbourne's wife). The image is undated, but the presence of the infant Margaret Ellen — born January 1918 — in arms suggests it was taken during one of Margaret's western trips in 1918 or 1919, when she would have travelled out to Oregon to meet her new granddaughter

and namesake. It is the only known photograph that places Margaret Brown in the same frame as her Oregon-resident son and his family.

OHIO: THE FINAL YEARS (C. 1930–1942)

By the late 1930s, Margaret had settled with her daughter Laura Berniece (Mrs. Fred Dixon) at Box 720, Diehl Road, in Green Township, Hamilton County — a rural address on the western edge of Cincinnati. Her son Melbourne L. Burnett's obituary in October 1937 listed his mother as "Margaret J., Cincinnati, Ohio" — the first formal documentation of her Ohio residence. By that time she was seventy-four years old and had outlived two of her sons: the infant grandchildren of an earlier generation had grown to middle age, and Melbourne himself was dead at fifty-two.

The Ohio years were marked by the steady accumulation of family losses. Melbourne died in October 1937; Samuel Lloyd, who had served in the First World War, died in 1938. By 1940, when her brother James Henry Brown died at Sussex, Margaret was identified in his obituary as one of his two surviving sisters — "Mrs. Margaret Burnett, Cincinnati, O." — the other being Mrs. Abram Saunders of Detroit. Her elder brother John W. Brown of Corn Hill had died the year before.

> *Margaret's residence with the Dixons placed her at the heart of an extended family network that stretched from Maine to Michigan to Ohio. Her daughter Laura had married Fred Dixon, a railway agent, in Vancouver, Washington, in April 1921 — a marriage that began at one end of the continent and settled at the other. The Diehl Road house in Green Township was a working farm community on Cincinnati's western fringe, the kind of place where an elderly mother could be accommodated within a daughter's household without strain.*

DEATH: OCTOBER 11, 1942

Margaret Jane Burnett had been suffering for approximately three years from carcinoma of the stomach, with advanced arteriosclerosis as a contributory cause. She died at the Diehl Road house on Sunday, October 11, 1942, at the age of seventy-nine years, nine months, and three days. Her physician, Dr. H. Higginbotham of Cincinnati, certified that he had attended her from May 7th to her death five months later, and that the diagnosis had been confirmed by X-ray. The certificate of death was filed with the Hamilton County registrar three days later. Her daughter Mrs. Fred Dixon — Laura Berniece — served as informant.

The Cincinnati Enquirer ran a brief death notice on Monday, October 12th: "Margaret Jane Burnett, beloved mother of Mrs. Laura Dixon, Mrs. Mary Watson, John E., Claude, and James Burnett, Sunday, October 11, 1942. Funeral services and interment at New Brunswick, Canada, Wednesday." The body was taken north by train, accompanied by Mrs. Dixon and the three Maine sons — Claude, John, and James — to be returned to the place where Margaret had married fifty-seven years earlier and where her husband had been waiting in the Petitcodiac cemetery for the better part of a quarter-century.

The Telegraph-Journal's obituary, published October 19th under a Petitcodiac dateline, described her as the daughter of Scottish pioneers of the Corn Hill district, the wife of Samuel Burnett during the years he was principal of Petitcodiac High School, and a woman with a large connection in the section who would regret her passing. The funeral service was held at the United Baptist Church and conducted by the Rev. G. B. Linton. The pallbearers were R. L. Davis, Foster Davis, and Percy Marr.

The committal service contained a striking detail. During the burial in the Baptist Church cemetery, the ashes of her son Samuel Lloyd Burnett — who had died in 1938 and had been a veteran of the First World War — were interred with his mother. Samuel Lloyd had not been buried at Petitcodiac at the time of his own death; his cremated remains had evidently been kept for a future occasion. That occasion was his mother's funeral. Margaret was laid to rest alongside Samuel, her husband of thirty-two years, with the ashes of one of their sons placed in the same grave.

> *The Telegraph-Journal's October 1942 obituary is the fullest single source for Margaret Brown's life and the only one that quotes the Scottish origins of her parents, the connection to Samuel's career at the Petitcodiac school, and the unusual detail of Samuel Lloyd's ashes being interred with hers. The Cincinnati Enquirer notice, by contrast, is purely a death notice for the Ohio family circle — brief, factual, and correctly identifying Laura (Mrs. Dixon) and Mary (Mrs. Watson) as the surviving daughters by their married surnames.*

SUMMARY

Margaret Jane Brown was the eldest daughter of a Corn Hill, New Brunswick, family with Scottish pioneer roots, who married at twenty-two and spent the next thirty-two years as the wife of a Petitcodiac schoolteacher and principal. She raised six children to adulthood out of eight she bore, and she lived to bury three of them, her husband, both of her parents, and

most of her siblings. After Samuel Burnett's sudden death from a paralytic stroke in May 1917, she did not stay in Petitcodiac. By the following year she was living in Maine with her sons, and over the next two decades she moved among her children's households — Maine, Michigan, and finally Ohio — visiting Corn Hill and Petitcodiac as the occasion called for it but never again making a permanent home in New Brunswick.

She died in Ohio in October 1942 at the age of seventy-nine, of stomach cancer, in the house her daughter Laura kept on Diehl Road on the western edge of Cincinnati. Her body was taken north by her daughter and three of her surviving sons, and she was buried at Petitcodiac in the cemetery where Samuel had lain since 1917 — with the ashes of their soldier son Samuel Lloyd interred with her in the same grave. The headstone records her as "Margaret J. Brown, 1862–1942," the year of her birth quietly mistaken by a single digit.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Margaret Jane Burnett, State of Ohio, Department of Health; Hamilton County, Green Township; File No. 59778; principal cause: carcinoma of stomach; contributory: arteriosclerosis; physician Dr. H. Higginbotham, Cincinnati; informant: Mrs. Fred Dixon (Laura), Box 720 Diehl Rd.; filed October 14, 1942.

List or Manifest of Alien Passengers Applying for Admission — Port of Jackman, Maine; Margaret J. Burnett, age 58, July 12, 1921; from Petitcodiac, N.B., to son John at Brownville Junction, Maine.

Marriage Certificate of Daughter — Fred Dixon and Laura Burnett, Clark County, Washington, April 28, 1921; Certificate of Marriage No. 6280 (lists Samuel Burnett and Margaret Brown as parents of bride).

Death Certificate of Son — Melbourne L. Burnett, State of Oregon, Multnomah County; State Reg. No. 5364; filed October 25, 1937 (lists mother as Margaret Brown, b. New Brunswick).

Newspaper Sources

The Times-Transcript (Moncton, New Brunswick) • 18 Feb 1885 (marriage notice) • 26 May 1917 (obituary of Samuel M. Burnett) • 3 Aug 1918 (visiting Petitcodiac)

The Moncton Transcript • 9 Jun 1899 (burial of mother Margaret Brown) • 31 Jul 1905 (visit to James H. Brown, Corn Hill) • 9 Sep 1926 (Cornhill Notes — weekend at John W. Brown's) • 9 Apr 1940 (obituary of brother James Henry Brown)

Telegraph-Journal (Saint John, New Brunswick) • 22 Sep 1915 (Claude Burnett's visit to parents) • 3 May 1939 (obituary of brother John W. Brown) • 19 Oct 1942 (“Mrs. Margaret Burnett” obituary, Petitcodiac dateline)

The St. John Standard (Saint John, New Brunswick) • 29 Jun 1918 (Salisbury — visiting Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Brown)

The Cincinnati Enquirer • 12 Oct 1942 (death notice)

The Oregon Daily Journal • 31 Oct 1937 (obituary of son Melbourne L. Burnett — lists mother as “Margaret J., Cincinnati, Ohio”)

Family and Genealogical Sources

Gravestone photograph — Burnett family stone, Petitcodiac, New Brunswick: "Samuel M. Burnett, 1858–1917; his wife Margaret J. Brown, 1862–1942."

Family portrait photograph — (undated, c. 1918–1919) — porch scene tagged with Ellen Robb Nickerson, Melbourne Leroy Burnett, Margaret Jane Brown, Margaret Ellen Burnett, and Daisy May Propst (family collection).

FamilySearch family record — Margaret Jane Brown (Person ID 2Z38-5F8); parents John W. Brown (2Z38-YK3) and Margaret Morton (2Z38-RJW), m. 31 May 1845, Loudoun, Ayrshire, Scotland; eleven siblings.

HENRY TAYLOR PROPST

Oregon Pioneer • Farmer • Settler

ILLINOIS • OREGON • WASHINGTON (STATE) • ALBERTA, CANADA

Also known as: H. T. Propst • Henry Propst • J. L. Propst (used in Canada)

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	January 25, 1849, Sugar Grove Township, Menard, Illinois
DIED	December 20, 1929, Goldendale, Klickitat County, Washington (age 80)
BURIAL	I.O.O.F. Cemetery; Goldendale, Washington
FATHER	Anthony Propst (1810–1852)
MOTHER	Lucinda Powell (1817–1852)
MARRIED	October 30, 1870, Linn County, Oregon, to Ellen R. Nickerson (1855–1943)
CHILDREN	Howard Lawrence Propst (1872–1962) Frank Propst (1878–1878) Otis Wesley Propst (1880–1960) Daisy M. Propst (1897–1997)
SIBLINGS	John Wesley Propst (1837–1939) Sarah M. Propst (1839–1845) Mary Evaline Propst (1841–1924) James Marion Propst (1843–1901) Margaret Ann Propst (1845–1907)

> *Note on name variants: Henry is consistently identified as "H. T. Propst" in Oregon and Washington sources. In the Canadian newspaper record — specifically the Edmonton Journal and Edmonton Bulletin coverage of the Peace River farming community at Van Rena, Alberta — he appears as "J. L. Propst." The reason for this different set of initials in Canada is not known. The identification of J. L. Propst as Henry himself (not his son Howard) is confirmed by family knowledge. His son Howard L. Propst farmed in the same district and appears in those same papers under his own name.*

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Henry Taylor Propst was born on January 25, 1849, in Springfield, Illinois, the son of Anthony Propst and Lucinda Powell. The defining event of Henry Propst's childhood was the westward crossing. In 1852, when he was three years old, the family joined one of the great ox-team caravans heading for the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Both his father and mother died before the family reached their destination — one of the stark human costs embedded in the overland migration statistics. What became of the orphaned boy on the trail, and who took him in on arrival, is not recorded in surviving sources. What is clear is that he grew to manhood in Linn County, Oregon, in the farming country of the central Willamette Valley, and that in early manhood he joined the Christian Church, a faith he maintained for the rest of his life.

> *The Oregon Trail emigrations of the early 1850s were among the largest in the overland migration era. Disease, particularly cholera, claimed thousands of emigrants during these crossings, and orphaned children were an acknowledged feature of the wagon trains. Henry Propst's survival as a toddler and his subsequent settlement in Linn County places him among the youngest of Oregon's pioneer generation.*

OREGON: LINN COUNTY AND EARLY FARMING (C. 1852–1883)

Henry Propst grew up in Linn County, in the farming heartland of the Willamette Valley, and it was there that he married and established himself as a landholder. On October 30, 1870, at the residence of the bride's parents, he married Miss Ellen R. Nickerson — all parties of Linn County — in a ceremony officiated by the Reverend A. Powell, with James M. Propst (his brother) among the witnesses. The Albany Register noted the occasion warmly, wishing the couple "long, contented and fruitful lives."

By April 1874, Henry was actively buying and selling land. The Albany Register's real estate transaction listings for that week show two deals in his name: a transfer to Enoch Miller of just over seventeen acres for $550, and a transfer to G. W. Propst of eighty-two acres for $2,670. The second transaction suggests a family land arrangement of some kind, possibly a division or consolidation of Propst family holdings. Together the figures paint a picture of a man who understood property and was actively managing his position in the local land market.

In January 1883, when a new lodge of the Ancient Order of Templars was organized at Knox Butte — a rural community near Albany — Henry Propst was among the founding members,

elected to serve as Guard. The lodge started with a membership of about forty, a substantial founding for a rural organization.

> *The Knox Butte area, east of Albany in Linn County, was a farming community with a developed institutional life by the early 1880s. Fraternal lodges — the Templars, the Grange, the Odd Fellows — provided mutual aid, social structure, and civic connection in communities that lacked other institutions. Henry's presence at the founding of the Knox Butte Templars lodge places him among the organized, civic-minded agricultural families of the district.*

MOVING EAST: GILLIAM COUNTY, OREGON (C. 1895–1901)

By the mid-1890s, Henry Propst had moved from the Willamette Valley to the drier wheat-farming country of Gilliam County, in north-central Oregon. The Condon Globe, the paper of record for that region, places him at Clem — a small community in Gilliam County — as early as May 1895, when it reported that "Henry T. Propst of Clem has been very sick the last week or so with a severe case of cold, verging on pneumonia." He evidently recovered, and by September 1898 the same paper noted him acquiring a new hack — an upgrade from a horse-drawn wagon — convenient for carrying goods between Clem and the neighboring community of Olex, both small towns in Gilliam County.

December 1897 brought a birth notice with a distinctly human footnote. The Condon Globe reported that a daughter (Daisy May) had been born on December 4th to Mr. and Mrs. H. T. Propst at Arlington, Oregon — and noted that Henry was "nearly tickled to death" given that nearly a score of years had passed since such an event had last occurred in their family. The notice added, with evident amusement, that son Howard L. Propst had written in asking the paper not to mix up the initials, as many people thought the birth was his — but he wanted it clearly known that it was not. The incident confirms that by 1897 Henry and Howard were both well enough known in the district that their shared initial combination caused genuine public confusion.

In June 1901, the Condon Globe recorded that Mr. and Mrs. H. T. Propst of Clem, and H. L. Propst of Matney, had returned from Farmington, Washington, where they had been called by the death of a brother of H. T. Propst (James M. Propst).

> *Gilliam County in the late nineteenth century was wheat-farming country, part of the Columbia Plateau region that had been opened to large-scale dryland agriculture following the completion of the railroad through the Columbia River gorge. Communities like Clem and Olex were small service*

> *points for farming families spread across the rolling wheat country. Henry Propst's move from the green Willamette Valley to this drier, more exposed country was part of a broader pattern of westward settlers pushing into the plateau seeking cheaper land.*

CANADA, SPOKANE, AND NATURALIZATION (C. 1901–1916)

After 1901, Henry Propst's trail leads north into Canada. The 1906 Canadian Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta provides the clearest evidence of this chapter: Henry T. Propst, head of household, age 57, born Illinois, is recorded at Fort Pelly, Saskatchewan, with immigration to Canada dated 1904. His wife Ellen Robb Nickerson, age 50, born in Oregon, immigrated the same year. Their daughter Daisy, age 8, born in the United States, likewise arrived in 1904 — meaning the whole family relocated together. Howard L. Propst and his wife Jessie May Davidson appear in the same census at an adjacent entry, also at Fort Pelly with an 1904 immigration date, confirming that father and son made the Canadian move in concert.

A Dominion Lands Homestead Grant register also records a patent granted to H. T. Propst for the south-east quarter of Section 33, Township 35, Range 1, dated 1904 — the formal land claim that anchored the family's Saskatchewan settlement. The naturalization document Henry later filed in Spokane in January 1912 confirms the picture: he had become a naturalized Canadian subject and, on returning to the United States, was renouncing allegiance to the King of Great Britain and Ireland. He entered the United States from Fort Pelly, Saskatchewan, at Eastport, Idaho, on or about April 1, 1908.

The Canadian newspaper record fills a later part of Henry's Canada affiliation. Under the initials J. L. Propst — a name variant whose origin is unexplained but whose identification as Henry is confirmed through newspaper articles — he appears in the Edmonton Journal and Edmonton Bulletin as a substantial farmer in the Van Rena district of the Peace River country, northern Alberta. A January 1914 Edmonton Journal report on progress in the Peace River settlement noted that one settler, J. L. Propst, had raised no fewer than 1,400 bushels of No. 1 hard wheat and 1,800 bushels of oats in a single season — yields that spoke to real agricultural competence in a challenging frontier environment. By June 1916, an Edmonton Bulletin correspondent passing through the Blue-Sky district, west of the Peace River, stopped for dinner at the prosperous home of Mr. J. L. Propst, a native of Oregon who had come out only a few years before.

Henry's son Howard L. Propst farmed in the same Van Rena district during these years, and the two men — father and son — appear to have operated as farming partners on an extensive scale. The October 1916 Edmonton Journal noted that Howard Propst of Van Rena, who with his father J. L. Propst did wheat raising on an extensive scale in the district, had been in Edmonton for a few days. Later that same year, in December 1916, the paper reported that Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Propst, well-known residents of Van Rena for the last three years, had gone to southern Oregon to join Howard Propst, who had preceded them some weeks earlier — and that they had leased their splendid ranch, implements, and stock for the next two years. The departure was evidently the end of the Alberta chapter.

> *The Peace River country of northern Alberta was among the last and most remote agricultural frontiers opened in the Canadian West. Settlement in the Van Rena district proceeded only after rail access had extended sufficiently to make wheat shipment viable — and even then, hauling grain ninety miles to the end of steel [railroad] by sleigh was a serious undertaking.*

While the Alberta farming was underway, Henry had also established a base at Spokane, Washington. In January 1912, he filed his Declaration of Intention to become a United States citizen from that address — 617 Providence Avenue — a document that offers the most detailed physical description of him in the surviving record. He was then sixty-two years old, a laborer by occupation, five feet five inches tall, weighing one hundred ninety-three pounds, with a dark complexion, dark hair, and brown eyes. The Spokesman-Review for May 1915 references his wife Ellen at the same address as "Mrs. H. T. Propst of W617 Providence Avenue" — suggesting Ellen maintained the Spokane household while Henry ranched in Alberta, or that the family moved between the two bases during this period. A Port of Kingsgate, British Columbia, border crossing report for March 1916 lists H. T. Propst, born Illinois, travelling from Washington to Alberta — carrying declared cash and merchandise valued at $1,590 — direct documentary evidence of the cross-border movement that characterized his life in these years.

PORTLAND AND THE GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY (1920)

On November 7, 1920, the Sunday Oregonian recorded that Mr. and Mrs. Henry T. Propst had celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on October 30 — fifty years to the day from their Linn County marriage in 1870. The celebration was held at their home at 46 Shaver Street in Portland, Oregon. Their two sons — Howard L. Propst of Vanrena, Alberta, Canada, and Otis W. Propst of Vale, Oregon — came with their families. Their daughter, Mrs. M. L.

Burnett of Umatilla, Oregon, attended with family. Other guests included Ross McKechnie and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. H. N. Frazer, and Mrs. Fannie Goetchins.

By October 1923, Henry and Ellen Propst were present at a surprise gathering at the Knox Butte home of his brother J. W. Propst — a reunion that brought together an extraordinary collection of old Linn County families: Cornetts, McKechnies, Frazers, Meanses, Reynoldses, Nadans, and Propsts, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Melbourne Burnett and children of Biggs. The gathering had the character of a multigenerational homecoming for people who had grown up together in the Knox Butte country decades before.

> *The Propst family connection to the McKechnie family is confirmed by the 1924 obituary of Henry's sister Mrs. Mary Evaline McKechnie (Albany Democrat, May 1, 1924), which lists J. W. Propst of Albany and H. T. Propst of Portland as brothers of the deceased.*

GOLDENDALE, WASHINGTON: FINAL YEARS (C. 1924–1929)

By 1924, Henry Propst had left Portland and settled in Goldendale, Washington, the county seat of Klickitat County, where his son Howard L. Propst also lived. The death certificate confirms Goldendale as his place of death and residence, and lists his occupation as farmer — the identity he had maintained across more than half a century, several states and two countries.

The Goldendale Sentinel for November 21, 1929, carried a brief note: "H. T. Propst, father of H. L. Propst, is quite ill with heart trouble, but is somewhat improved the past few days." The note identified the precise cause that would claim him less than a month later. He died on December 20, 1929, at his home in Goldendale. The principal cause of death as mitral regurgitation, with advanced age as a contributing factor. He was eighty years, ten months, and twenty-five days old.

His funeral was held on the Sunday following his death, with services conducted by the Reverend R. C. Young. He was interred in the I.O.O.F. (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) cemetery.

SUMMARY

Henry Taylor Propst's life was, in its essential shape, the arc of the American frontier — and then some. Illinois-born, orphaned on the Oregon Trail at three years old, raised in the

Willamette Valley, farming Linn County's good land, moving progressively eastward and northward as cheaper or more productive ground beckoned: from the Willamette Valley to the dry wheat country of Gilliam County, then north into Canada. He farmed the Peace River country of Alberta under the initials J. L. Propst — why he used different initials there is not known — running what the Edmonton Bulletin called a prosperous home. He returned to the United States in 1908, filed for citizenship in Spokane, and spent his last decade in Portland and then Goldendale, near his son Howard.

What the record captures best is the texture of a long and mobile life: land deals in Linn County in 1874; a founding role in a Knox Butte fraternal lodge in 1883; the dry wit of the Condon Globe noting that Henry was nearly tickled to death by a late-life daughter in 1897; exceptional grain harvests in the Peace River frontier; a Spokane citizenship filing at sixty-two; a golden wedding party at 46 Shaver Street, Portland, with sons come from Alberta and Oregon; a final illness marked by heart trouble in Goldendale; and a funeral conducted by Rev. R. C. Young with burial in the I.O.O.F. cemetery.

He was eighty years old when he died. Ellen survived him. He had crossed the plains as a toddler with no parents, and he arrived at the end of his life surrounded by children, grandchildren, and a brother who had made the same journey and lived to ninety-two. By any measure, the life was full.

His connection to the broader family network that is the subject of this research runs directly through his daughter Daisy May Propst, who married Melbourne Leroy Burnett in the Peace River country of Alberta in 1916, and who served as informant on Melbourne's death certificate in Multnomah County, Oregon, in 1937 — the document that preserves the Propst name in this genealogical record.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Henry Taylor Propst, Washington State Board of Health, Klickitat County; Record No. 64; principal cause: mitral regurgitation; secondary: advanced age; physician Dr. W. H. Draithe, Goldendale; filed December 21, 1929.

1906 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta — Henry T. Propst (entry 148) and Howard L. Propst (entry 151), Fort Pelly, Saskatchewan; immigration year 1904.

Dominion Lands Homestead Grant Register — Hy. T. Propst; S.E. quarter, Section 33, Township 35, Range 1; patented 1904.

Port of Kingsgate, B.C., Report of Admissions — H. T. Propst, born Illinois, travelling from Washington to Alberta; declared value $1,590; March 1916.

U.S. Naturalization Records index — Washington District Court, Declarations of Intention 1908–1909, #901–1400; Propst, Henry Taylor, sequence 10/143.

Declaration of Intention — Henry Taylor Propst, United States District Court, Eastern District of Washington; No. 4043; filed January 17, 1912.

Marriage Certificate — Henry T. Propst and Ellen R. Nickerson, Linn County, Oregon, October 30, 1870; witnesses James W. Propst and James B. Hornton; filed November 5, 1870.

Newspaper Sources

The Albany Register (Albany, Oregon) • November 5, 1870 (marriage notice) • April 25, 1874 (real estate transactions)

Albany Democrat (Albany, Oregon) • January 5, 1883 (Ancient Order of Templars, Knox Butte) • November 1, 1923 (Knox Butte gathering) • May 1, 1924 (obituary of Mrs. Mary McKechnie)

Albany Democrat-Herald (Albany, Oregon) • December 24, 1929 (death notice, “Henry Propst, 80, Brother of Albany Man Aged 92, Dies”)

Condon Globe (Condon, Oregon) • May 3, 1895 (illness notice, Clem) • December 10, 1897 (birth notice, Arlington) • September 8, 1898 (Clem, hack notice) • June 27, 1901 (return from Farmington, Washington)

The Spokesman-Review (Spokane, Washington) • May 18, 1915 (H. L. Propst, son of Mrs. H. T. Propst of Spokane, Peace River district)

The Sunday Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) • November 7, 1920 (golden wedding anniversary)

Goldendale Sentinel (Goldendale, Washington) • November 21, 1929 (illness notice)

Obituary clipping (source publication not identified in PDF; likely Goldendale-area paper) • December 1929

Edmonton Journal (Edmonton, Alberta) • January 20, 1914 (J. L. Propst wheat yields, Peace River) • July 20, 1916 (Mrs. M. L. Burnett visit to parents, Van Rena) • October 21, 1916 (Howard Propst and J. L. Propst, Van Rena) • December 9, 1916 (J. L. Propst departure from Van Rena for Oregon)

The Edmonton Bulletin (Edmonton, Alberta) • June 19, 1916 (J. L. Propst, prosperous home, famous wheat carload)

Family and Genealogical Sources

Gravestone photograph — Henry T. Propst, Jan 25, 1849 – Dec 20, 1929 (family collection / uploaded source PDF).

ELLEN ROBB NICKERSON

Oregon Pioneer • Wife • Mother

OREGON • WASHINGTON • SASKATCHEWAN • ALBERTA • IDAHO

Also known as: Ellen R. Propst • Mrs. H. T. Propst • Mrs. J. L. Propst • Mrs. Henry Propst

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	October 24, 1855, Albany, Linn County, Oregon
DIED	October 28, 1943, Orofino, Clearwater County, Idaho (age 88)
BURIAL	Lewiston, Nez Perce County, Idaho
FATHER	Hugh Nickerson (1818–1896)
MOTHER	Sarepta Parrish (1823–1862)
MARRIED	October 30, 1870, at the residence of her parents in Linn County, Oregon, to Henry Taylor Propst (1849–1929)
CHILDREN	Howard Lawrence Propst (1872–1962) Frank Propst (1878–1878, died in infancy) Otis Wesley Propst (1880–1960) Daisy May Propst (1897–1997)
SIBLINGS	Vilinda Elizabeth Nickerson (1844–1906) Pernina Jane Nickerson (1849–1850) Half Siblings Olive Nickerson (1865–1876) Elmer Nickerson (1871–1946) Hattie Nickerson (1873–1875) Oneita Nickerson (1878–1945)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Ellen Robb Nickerson was born on October 24, 1855, in Albany, Linn County, Oregon, the third daughter of Hugh and Sarepta (Parrish) Nickerson. Her parents had crossed the plains by ox-team caravan in 1851, settling on a 320-acre claim three and a half miles east of Albany on the Albany prairie. By the time Ellen was born, Hugh Nickerson was an established Linn

County farmer in his late thirties, working flax and wheat, building barns and fences, and putting down the kind of roots that would last forty-five years. Ellen was thus a member of the first generation born in Oregon to pioneer parents — a position that would shape her sense of place for the rest of her long life.

Her childhood was marked by early loss. Her mother Sarepta died on June 10, 1862, when Ellen was six years old; the cause is not recorded in surviving sources. Her father remarried in March 1864, to Susan Jane Devine, and from that second marriage came Ellen's half-siblings — Olive, Elmer, Hattie, and Nettie — among whom Hattie and Olive also died young. The household Ellen grew up in was thus shaped by the rhythms of mid-nineteenth-century farm mortality as much as by farming itself.

> *Albany in the 1850s and 1860s was the principal town of Linn County, sitting at the confluence of the Calapooia and Willamette Rivers. The Nickerson farm on the Albany prairie was part of a closely-knit pioneer community that included the Propst, Houston, Goltra, and McKechnie families — all of whom would intermarry and remain linked across the generations that followed. Ellen's marriage in 1870 to Henry T. Propst was very much a marriage within that pioneer community.*

MARRIAGE AND EARLY YEARS IN LINN COUNTY (1870–1880)

On October 30, 1870, at the residence of her parents in Linn County, Ellen Robb Nickerson married Henry Taylor Propst. The Albany Register noted the occasion warmly under its "Married" column, wishing the couple "long, contented and fruitful lives." Ellen was just fifteen — by the standards of the time and place, a young bride, though not exceptionally so for the Willamette Valley pioneer generation.

Her brother-in-law James W. Propst, who served as witness, would remain a fixture of the Propst family network for the next six decades — surviving Henry by surviving to ninety-two and still living at Albany at the time of her husband's death in 1929. The Propst and Nickerson families were thoroughly intertwined: Hugh Nickerson's 1874 land transactions included a deal with G. W. Propst for eighty-two acres, and Ellen and Henry's marriage drew the two pioneer families permanently together.

The first decade of marriage brought three children in close succession. Howard Lawrence Propst was born in 1872; Frank Propst followed in 1878 but died the same year; Otis Wesley Propst arrived in 1880. The family lived in the Lebanon area of Linn County by June 1880,

where the federal census placed them, and Henry was actively farming and trading in land through this period.

> *Infant and child mortality in rural Oregon in the 1870s remained substantial despite improving conditions. The death of Frank Propst in his birth year — like the deaths of two of Ellen's half-siblings as children — was a sorrow common enough to be expected but no less keenly felt.*

GILLIAM COUNTY: CLEM, ARLINGTON, AND THE SUNSHINE SOCIETY (C. 1895–1903)

By the mid-1890s, the Propst family had left the green Willamette Valley for the drier wheat country of Gilliam County, in north-central Oregon. The Condon Globe placed Henry at Clem as early as May 1895 with a bout of pneumonia, and the family's residence at Arlington — a Columbia River town not far from Clem — is established by the December 1897 birth of their fourth and last child, Daisy May Propst, who was born there on December 4th. The Condon Globe announced the arrival with the dry humor of small-town journalism, noting that Henry was "nearly tickled to death" since nearly twenty years had passed since the last such event in the family, and that son Howard L. Propst had written in asking the paper not to mix up the initials, as people kept assuming the new baby was his.

In January 1898 the Condon Globe noted that Mrs. V. E. Houston of Condon — Ellen's older sister Valinda — had been visiting her sister Mrs. Henry Propst at Arlington for several days. The connection between the Nickerson sisters remained strong across the distances of eastern Oregon: Valinda would also visit from Pendleton in March 1896, when Ellen made the return trip to spend three months with her, a portion of which Ellen was sick. Henry met her at Arlington Monday night upon her return.

What the Gilliam County years capture most distinctly, however, is Ellen's own public life. From at least August 1901 through March 1902, she served as President of the Highland Branch of the International Sunshine Society at Clem, Oregon — a small but active women's mutual-aid organization. The Condon Globe printed her monthly reports under her signature, "Ellen R. Propst, President." The Society wrote letters to shut-ins, sent baskets and reading matter to the sick and the cripple, distributed circulars, sold baskets and quilts on behalf of needy members, and remembered the housebound at Christmas. Her July 1901 report alone recorded thirty-four sunshine letters, four birthday greetings, and the sale of four baskets for a needy shut-in — all under her own hand.

> *The International Sunshine Society, founded in 1900 by Cynthia Westover Alden, was a national women's organization dedicated to small acts of kindness — visiting the sick, writing cheerful letters to shut-ins, helping the blind and crippled. Branches sprang up across small-town America in the early twentieth century. Ellen's leadership of the Clem branch places her within a network of rural women who were taking on organized civic and charitable work at a time when such roles were still uncommon for women in farming communities.*

SPOKANE AND THE CANADIAN YEARS (C. 1901–1916)

Sometime around 1901 or shortly thereafter, the Propst family established a household in Spokane, Washington — at 720 Euclid Avenue by 1902, and later at W617 Providence Avenue. The Spokesman-Review captures Ellen at this address with an entrepreneurial energy not visible in earlier sources. In February 1903 she advertised under "PERSONAL" that those wishing to try "the natural body brace for the cure and relief of general weakness" could have measures taken, brace delivered, and fitted at home or at her residence. A second advertisement the same month sought canvassers for Prof. J. P. Long's magnetic combs — "good sellers, good commission; cures dandruff, stops the hair from coming out; lasts a lifetime; secure territory." Mrs. Ellen R. Propst was listed as general agent.

She was also dealing in real estate. A June 1902 Spokesman-Review listing recorded a transfer from H. E. Foster to Ellen R. Propst — lot 10, block 6, Whiting's addition — for $1,300, a substantial sum that placed her among that day's notable real estate transactions in Spokane. Whether these activities were pursued in Henry's absence (he was farming and ranching elsewhere) or in concert with him is not entirely clear, but the picture they paint is unmistakable: Ellen R. Propst was running a small commercial enterprise from a Spokane address in 1902–1903, listed in her own name, with her own phone line and her own commission structure.

> *Married women operating in their own name in the commercial press of 1903 were not unheard of, but they were also not the norm. That Ellen R. Propst placed advertisements under her own name, took commissions on her own account, and conducted real estate transactions as the named principal speaks to a degree of independent commercial activity that the previous record — focused on her husband and her children — had not revealed.*

By 1904 the family was moving north into Canada. The 1906 Canadian Census places Ellen at Fort Pelly, Saskatchewan, age 50, born in Oregon, with husband Henry T. Propst (age 57) and daughter Daisy (age 8), all having immigrated in 1904. A Dominion Lands homestead patent

in Henry's name was granted in 1904 for land in Township 35, Range 1 — the formal claim that anchored the Saskatchewan settlement. By 1908 Henry had re-entered the United States from Fort Pelly, but the wider family's Canadian chapter was far from over.

By the mid-1910s, Henry was farming on an extensive scale in the Van Rena district of the Peace River country in northern Alberta — confusingly under the initials J. L. Propst in the Edmonton press, while Ellen appears in those same papers as Mrs. J. L. Propst. The June 1916 Edmonton Bulletin described the prosperous home of Mr. J. L. Propst, a native of Oregon, where a correspondent stopped for dinner. A July 1916 Edmonton Journal note recorded that Mrs. M. L. Burnett — Ellen's daughter Daisy, then newly married — and Mrs. F. E. Algar had returned home after spending a week at the home of Mrs. Burnett's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Propst of Van Rena. It is the clearest documentary evidence that Ellen was at Van Rena with Henry through these years, hosting her grown daughter who lived nearby at Peace River.

In December 1916, the Edmonton Journal carried the announcement that Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Propst, well-known residents of Van Rena for the last three years, had gone to southern Oregon to join their son Howard, who had preceded them some weeks earlier. They had leased their splendid ranch, implements, and stock for the next two years. It was the end of the Canadian chapter — though Ellen would make at least one further trip back, recorded in the 1916 immigration documents that note her crossing at Vermont, an unusual entry point that may reflect a circuitous return from a visit east.

> *The use of different initials by Henry Propst in Canada — J. L. rather than H. T. — remains unexplained in the surviving record. It is possible the change reflected a deliberate adoption of a different name for Canadian business purposes, or simply the way local correspondents recorded him; the consistency of the usage across multiple Edmonton papers over several years suggests it was not a single misprint. Whatever the reason, Ellen appears throughout the Canadian record as Mrs. J. L. Propst, the same woman who had been Mrs. H. T. Propst at Clem and would be again on her return to Oregon.*

PORTLAND: THE GOLDEN WEDDING AND THE FAMILY REUNION YEARS (1920–1928)

By January 1920, the federal census placed Henry and Ellen at 46 Montana Avenue in Portland, Oregon. Later that year — on October 30, 1920, fifty years to the day from their Linn County wedding — they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary at their home. The Sunday Oregonian for November 7th covered the occasion: their two sons, Howard L. Propst of

Vanrena, Alberta, and Otis W. Propst of Vale, Oregon, attended with their families; their daughter, Mrs. M. L. Burnett of Umatilla, attended with hers. Other guests included Ross McKechnie and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. H. N. Frazer, and Mrs. Fannie Goetchins — old Linn County names from Ellen's pioneer girlhood, now reassembled for an anniversary fifty years on.

Through the 1920s, Ellen and Henry moved among Portland addresses — 9 E. 61st Street in 1923, 104-285 Ross Street through 1926, 202-250 E. 1st North by 1927 — the kind of unsettled movement that often accompanies retirement in old age. In October 1923 they were at the Knox Butte home of Henry's brother J. W. Propst for a surprise gathering that the Albany Democrat-Herald described in terms that capture the breadth of the Linn County extended family: the Cornetts, McKechnies, Frazers, Means, Reynolds, Nadans, and Propsts, with Mr. and Mrs. Melbourne Burnett (Daisy and her husband) and children of Biggs. It read as a multigenerational homecoming for people who had grown up together on the Albany prairie.

GOLDENDALE, WASHINGTON: WIDOWHOOD AND PRACTICE (1928–1936)

By September 1928, Ellen had relocated to Ashland, Jackson County, Oregon — a brief residence captured in the FamilySearch event records — and by late 1929 she and Henry had settled at Goldendale, Washington, the county seat of Klickitat County, where their son Howard L. Propst also lived.

Henry’s health failed in late 1929. The Goldendale Sentinel for November 21st carried a brief note that "H. T. Propst, father of H. L. Propst, is quite ill with heart trouble, but is somewhat improved the past few days." He did not recover. He died at home in Goldendale on December 20, 1929, at the age of eighty, his cause of death recorded as mitral regurgitation with advanced age as a contributing factor. The funeral was held on the Sunday following; he was interred in the I.O.O.F. cemetery.

Ellen, Howard, and Daisy together placed a card of thanks in the Goldendale Sentinel: "We wish to thank the many friends for their assistance and expressions of sympathy during our recent bereavement in the loss of our husband and father. — Ellen R. Propst, H. L. Propst, Daisy Burnett." It was a notice written in three voices but one hand, and it placed the surviving wife at the head of the family.

Ellen continued at Goldendale through the early 1930s. The 1930 federal census, taken April 11th, recorded her occupation as Practitioner for Christian Science. A June 1930 incorporation notice in the Oregon Daily Journal lists "H. L. Propst, Inc. of Hermiston, $5000" with incorporators H. L., J. M., and Ellen R. Propst — placing her formally as a director of her son Howard's mercantile corporation in Hermiston, Oregon. Her continued involvement in family business through her seventies is consistent with the commercial activity she had shown in Spokane three decades earlier.

> *The H. L. Propst, Inc. incorporation of 1930 is notable: Ellen R. Propst, at age seventy-four and recently widowed, was listed as an incorporator and presumably a shareholder. Whether this represented an active business role or a formal protection of her widow's interests in her son's enterprise, it places her name on the public business record of Oregon in a way that few women of her generation appear.*

FINAL YEARS: POMEROY, OROFINO, AND DEATH (1935–1943)

By 1935, Ellen had moved with her son Howard's family to Pomeroy, Garfield County, Washington — a small wheat-farming town in the southeast corner of the state. Her 1943 Idaho death certificate states her last residence in Washington was Pomeroy, and that she had lived in Idaho for seven years at the time of her death. The Oregon Daily Journal obituary published October 30, 1943 confirms the sequence: "She had previously been a resident of Pomeroy, Wash., and Hermiston, Ore."

In 1936, at the age of eighty-one, she moved with her son to Orofino, Clearwater County, Idaho. The 1940 federal census recorded her at Orofino Election Precinct 1, in the household of Howard L. Propst. The Oregon Daily Journal obituary noted that she had "come to Orofino in 1936 to live with her son, H. L. Propst, and family." Howard was by then operating a variety store in the town.

Ellen's final illness was prolonged. The October 1943 obituary in the Oregon Daily Journal reported that she had died "at the family home after nearly six months' illness." The Idaho death certificate is more clinical: the principal cause of death was listed as old age complicated by other conditions, with malnutrition cited.

She died at the family home in Orofino on October 28, 1943, at 9:30 in the evening. She was eighty-eight years old. Her son Howard L. Propst served as informant on the death certificate, signing his own address as Orofino. Her body was removed for burial; the death certificate

notes "Removal" rather than a local interment, suggesting she was returned to be buried near Henry. Her gravestone — photographed in the family record — bears simply: "ELLEN R. PROPST · 1855 — 1943."

> *Ellen Robb Nickerson Propst's eighty-eight years of life encompassed the entire arc of Oregon's transformation from frontier territory to settled state. Born in 1855 to parents who had crossed the plains by ox team four years earlier, she lived to see the Second World War. Her death in October 1943 came at a time when the children of her own pioneer generation were themselves becoming the elders of a thoroughly modern American West.*

SUMMARY

Ellen Robb Nickerson was a true daughter of the Oregon frontier — born in 1855 in Albany to a pioneer family of the 1851 crossing, married at fifteen to Henry Taylor Propst (himself an 1852 overland survivor who had lost both parents on the trail), and witness across her eighty-eight years to the full transformation of the Pacific Northwest. She raised three children to adulthood through the Linn County farming years; followed her husband east to the dry wheat country of Gilliam County, where she presided over the Highland Branch of the International Sunshine Society at Clem; ran small commercial ventures in Spokane in her own name in the early 1900s; crossed into Saskatchewan in 1904 and lived afterward in the Peace River country of Alberta under the name Mrs. J. L. Propst; returned to Oregon to celebrate her golden wedding at Portland in 1920; took up a Christian Science Practitioner's role at age sixty-nine; was widowed at Goldendale in 1929; and lived her final years in her son Howard's household, first at Pomeroy, Washington, and then at Orofino, Idaho, where she died in October 1943.

What the surviving record captures best is the quiet expansion of her role over time. In the 1870s and 1880s she is visible only as a wife and mother. By 1901 she is signing newspaper reports as President of a women's society. By 1903 she is taking out commercial advertisements in her own name and conducting real estate transactions. By 1930 she is a key stakeholder in her son's corporation. Her public footprint grew steadily as she aged — exactly the opposite of what conventional narratives of women's lives in this period might predict.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Ellen Robb Propst, State of Idaho, Clearwater County; State File No. 136034; principal cause: old age with complications; informant: H. L. Propst, Orofino, Idaho; filed October 30, 1943.

Marriage Certificate — Henry T. Propst and Ellen R. Nickerson, Linn County, Oregon, October 30, 1870; witnesses James W. Propst and James B. Hornton; officiant Rev. Alfred Powell; filed November 5, 1870.

1906 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta — Henry T. Propst household (entry 148), Fort Pelly, Saskatchewan: Henry T. (head, 57, Illinois), Ellen (wife, 50, Oregon), Daisy (daughter, 8, United States); all immigrated 1904.

1920 U.S. Federal Census — 46 Montana Avenue, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

1930 U.S. Federal Census — Goldendale, Klickitat County, Washington; occupation: Practitioner, Christian Science.

1940 U.S. Federal Census — Orofino Election Precinct 1, Clearwater County, Idaho; residing in household of Howard L. Propst.

Delayed Certificate of Birth — Daisy May Propst (daughter), Oregon State Board of Health, State File No. DF-15570; identifies mother's maiden name as Ellen Robb Nickerson, born Oregon.

Newspaper Sources

The Albany Register (Albany, Oregon) • November 5, 1870 (marriage notice)

Condon Globe (Condon, Oregon) • March 20, 1896 (visit to Pendleton) • December 10, 1897 (birth of Daisy) • January 7, 1898 (V. E. Houston visit) • June 27, 1901 (return from Farmington) • August 8, 1901 (Highland Branch I.S.S. monthly report) • September 5, 1901 (Highland Branch I.S.S. monthly report) • October 10, 1901 (Highland Branch I.S.S. monthly report) • November 21, 1901 (Highland Branch I.S.S. monthly report) • December 5, 1901 (Highland Branch I.S.S. monthly report) • January 9, 1902 (Highland Branch I.S.S. monthly report) • March 13, 1902 (Highland Branch I.S.S. monthly report) • July 11, 1902 (Highland Branch I.S.S. monthly report)

The Spokesman-Review (Spokane, Washington) • June 3, 1902 (real estate transfer, lot 10, block 6, Whiting's addition, $1,300) • February 7, 1903 (Prof. J. P. Long magnetic combs canvassers) • February 11, 1903 (natural body brace advertisement) • May 18, 1915 (H. L. Propst, Peace River) • December 25, 1929 (“Pioneer of 1852 Dies”)

Edmonton Bulletin (Edmonton, Alberta) • June 19, 1916 (J. L. Propst, prosperous home, Blue-Sky district)

Edmonton Journal (Edmonton, Alberta) • July 20, 1916 (Mrs. M. L. Burnett visit to parents Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Propst, Van Rena) • December 9, 1916 (“Splendid Ranch” — Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Propst departing Van Rena for southern Oregon)

The Sunday Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) • November 7, 1920 (golden wedding anniversary, 46 Shaver Street)

Albany Democrat (Albany, Oregon) • November 1, 1923 (“Surprise Is Sprung on Knox Butte Man by Relatives’ Visit” — H. T. Propst family present)

Albany Democrat-Herald (Albany, Oregon) • December 24, 1929 (death notice, Henry Propst)

Goldendale Sentinel (Goldendale, Washington) • November 21, 1929 (illness notice, H. T. Propst) • December 26, 1929 (obituary, Henry Taylor Propst; card of thanks signed Ellen R. Propst, H. L. Propst, Daisy Burnett)

The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) • December 25, 1929 (obituary, Henry Taylor Propst)

The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, Oregon) • December 26, 1929 (obituary, Henry Taylor Propst) • June 15, 1930 ("New Incorporations" — H. L. Propst, Inc., Hermiston, incorporators include Ellen R. Propst) • October 30, 1943 ("Mrs. Ellen R. Propst Dies After Illness")

Albany Weekly Herald (Albany, Oregon) • August 27, 1896 (obituary, Hugh Nickerson — Mrs. Ella Probst named among surviving children)

Statesman Journal (Salem, Oregon) • August 25, 1896 (obituary, Hugh Nickerson — Mrs. E. R. Probst of Clem named)

Family and Genealogical Sources

FamilySearch record — (Person ID 2W64-V8L) — Ellen Robb Nickerson; compiled events, residences, and family relationships.

Family photographs — wedding portrait of H. T. and Ellen Nickerson Propst; later portrait of Ellen with daughter Daisy (family collection).

Gravestone photograph — Ellen R. Propst, 1855–1943 (family collection).

EDWARD EVANS PARRISH

Methodist Protestant Minister • Oregon Pioneer • Farmer • Judge

WEST VIRGINIA • OHIO • OREGON

Also known as: Rev. E. E. Parrish • Rev. Edward Parrish

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	November 20, 1791, Morgantown, Monongalia, Virginia (now West Virginia)
DIED	October 24, 1874, Albany, Linn County, Oregon (age 82)
BURIAL	Knox Butte Cemetery, Albany, Linn County, Oregon
FATHER	Edward Parrish (1748–1813) served in Revolutionary War
MOTHER	Rachel Evans (1768–1819)
FIRST MARRIAGE	March 31, 1814, Monongalia, Virginia, to Elizabeth Bussey (1796–1826)
SECOND MARRIAGE	March 22, 1827, Greene, Pennsylvania, to Rebecca Anne Maple (1803–1880)
CHILDREN	With Elizabeth Bussey: Adonijah Parrish (1815–1866) Heshbon Parrish (1817–1871) Jesse Bussey Parrish (1819–1898) Gamaliel Randall Parrish (1821–1884) Serepta Parrish (1823–1862) Pernina Colgate Parrish (1824–1896) With Rebecca Maple: Elizabeth Ellen Parrish (1828–1878) Thomas Maple Andrew Jackson Parrish (1830–1894) Mary Ann Springer Parrish (1832–1917) Rebecca Miranda Shinn Parrish (1834–1909) Edward Evans Parrish, Jr. (1836–1883) Rachel Marinda Parrish (1839–1879)
SIBLINGS	Sally Parrish (1790–1790) Cynthia Parrish (1792–1806)

	Delila Parrish (1794–1864) Eleanor Helena Parrish (1795–1868) Dorcas Parrish (1796–1868) Cassandra Parrish (1797–1885) Jesse Parrish (1799–1870) Evans Parrish (1800–1852) Sarah Parrish (1802–Deceased) William Richard Parrish (1803–1885) Isaac B Parrish Sr. (1805–Deceased) Ruth Parrish (1807–1882) Ephraim Parrish (1809–1809)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Edward Evans Parrish was born on November 20, 1791, in Monongalia County, in what was then Virginia — now West Virginia. His father, Edward Parrish (1748–1813), had served as a private in the Revolutionary War, and his mother was Rachel Evans (1768–1819). He was born into the generation that would inherit the new republic and carry its institutions westward.

He married twice. His first wife, Elizabeth Bussey, bore him six children before her death in 1826. He married again in 1827, to Rebecca Anne Maple, who would survive him by six years and eventually died in San Jose, California in 1880. Together the two marriages produced twelve children in all — a substantial family that, in the way of the frontier, scattered itself across the continent as the children came of age.

The family name appears in the sources as both 'Parrish' and 'Parish,' a variant spelling that persists in contemporaneous newspaper records and some genealogical sources. 'Parrish' is the form used consistently in official records and is adopted here.

> *The Parrish family claimed descent from Yorkshire, England, with the family having entered Virginia by 1635 according to family tradition. The branch that produced Edward Evans Parrish had been settled in the upper Ohio River country of western Virginia for several generations by the time of his birth in 1791.*

OHIO: MINISTRY AND EARLY CAREER (TO 1843)

Edward Evans Parrish was admitted on trial to the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church in 1830 and admitted into itinerancy in 1831. He was ordained Elder in 1832, and became a member of the Pittsburgh Conference of the Methodist Protestant at its organization in 1833.

His Ohio appointments spanned more than a decade and covered a wide circuit across the region: Zanesville Circuit (1831–1832), Champaign Circuit (1832–1833), Springfield Circuit (1833–1834), Mt. Pleasant Circuit (1834–1835), Youngstown (1835–1836), then a gap with no conference record from 1836–1841, followed by Woodfield Circuit (1841–1842) and Pennville Circuit (1842–1843).

The gap in the conference record from 1836 to 1841 is unexplained in the surviving sources. It may reflect a period of independent preaching, a removal to a different circuit, or simple gaps in the preservation of conference records.

> *The Methodist Protestant Church, organized in 1830 as a breakaway from the Methodist Episcopal Church, was distinguished by its democratic polity and rejection of episcopal authority. It drew ministers and congregations from the Scotch-Irish and English Protestant communities of Ohio and the upper Midwest. Parrish's long career in its ranks reflects a man who identified strongly with that tradition of lay-centered, circuit-riding Protestantism.*

It was in the Zanesville area that Hugh Nickerson — his future son-in-law's neighbor on the overland trail — was also living and working as a carpenter, placing the two families within the same community a decade before they would make the crossing west together.

THE 1844 OREGON TRAIL CROSSING

In October 1843, at the age of fifty-two, Edward Evans Parrish departed Ohio with his wife Rebecca and a large portion of their family, beginning the long journey west that would end with settlement in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. The family traveled by steamboat down the Ohio River to St. Louis, then continued to Platte City, Missouri, wintering in Andrew County before the spring departure.

On April 15, 1844, the company crossed the Missouri River into Indian Territory and joined a larger wagon train. The company operated under military-style organization, with General

Cornelius Gilliam commanding. Parrish kept a diary of the journey — one of the more detailed accounts of the 1844 crossing to survive — later published as The Oregon Trail: Diary of Rev. Edward Evans Parrish in 1844.

The early journey was dominated by relentless rain and flooded crossings. The company spent over a week waiting to cross one swollen creek, during which they built canoes and rafts to ferry wagons. Parrish preached when opportunity allowed and performed at least one wedding ceremony in route.

> *The 1844 emigration was among the heaviest to that point on the Oregon Trail, following the great migration of 1843. Parrish's company included numerous ministers and families from the Ohio and upper Midwest Methodist Protestant community. The military-style organization with captains and companies was typical of the larger wagon trains of the period, which had to manage both internal discipline and the logistics of moving several hundred people and animals across two thousand miles of open country.*

On July 15, after reaching the South Platte, a leadership crisis erupted when General Gilliam resigned along with First Colonel Benjamin Nichols. The unified train dissolved into independent companies. Parrish's group became the 'California Company' under Captain Saunders — seventeen wagons and one carriage, including Gilliam himself despite his resignation.

Starting July 18, Parrish fell seriously ill — possibly with a form of cholera, though he never identified his ailment. He noted his weakness seventeen times in the diary over the following months, yet there is no record of his riding in the wagon. He appears to have walked the remainder of the journey despite his condition. Remarkable, given that men in far better health gave up on the crossing every year.

The party passed Fort Laramie on July 31, Independence Rock on August 16, and crossed South Pass — the Continental Divide — on August 23. Parrish marked that moment with precision: 'Atlantic water forever gone and Pacific water to be our future drink.'

In September, his daughter Rebecca, age ten, suffered a broken thigh when she fell trying to get on or off the wagon and the wheel rolled over her. She endured the remainder of the journey jolting over rocks and rough ground. Parrish recorded eighteen days later that she 'complains not much except of pain occasioned by the jolting of the wagon.'

Reaching Whitman Mission at Waiilatpu in late October, the family briefly planned to winter there. Parrish attended Indian services and worked harvesting corn for Dr. Whitman — but departed after only a week, without explaining the change of plans.

The final leg followed the Columbia River downstream to The Dalles, where the party waited for boats and portaged around the Cascade Falls. The family finally reached Oregon City on the afternoon of December 10, 1844, and enrolled the children in school the very next day, despite the rain.

> *The 1844 diary is notable for its honesty about the hardships of the crossing and its mix of pastoral sensibility with practical frontier pragmatism. Parrish expressed genuine regret over the waste of forty thousand pounds of buffalo meat left to spoil through inexperience, prayed for fair weather and divine mercy at intervals throughout, and closed his account nineteen years later with the observation that Oregon had been transformed from a wilderness into an organized state. His summary exclamation — 'O, lovely Oregon!' — was evidently a settled conviction rather than a tourist sentiment.*

OREGON: LINN COUNTY SETTLEMENT AND MINISTRY (1845–1874)

The Parrish family's permanent settlement in Oregon took shape over the winter of 1844–1845. They moved from Oregon City to J. R. Robb's house in late February 1845, then sailed upriver in March, arriving at the Institute Farm on March 15. On July 11, 1845, they moved onto their own land claim, and completed a house on October 11, 1845 — exactly two years and one day after leaving the schoolhouse in Ohio.

He settled in Marion County initially, establishing a farm there with apparent energy and success. The Weekly Oregon Statesman for May 11, 1852, carried an item that speaks to his agricultural competence with frontier appreciation: a monster beet raised on the farm of Rev. E. E. Parrish of Marion County, measuring forty-two inches in circumference and weighing forty-two pounds, had been brought to the paper's office. 'It is apparently perfectly sound and solid.'

His ministerial work continued through the Oregon annual conference of the Methodist Protestant Church. In September 1858, the sixth session of the Oregon annual conference met at the M.P. Church in Jefferson. Parrish was listed among the Elders and was elected delegate to the M.E. Conference of Oregon. The same conference lists Hugh Nickerson as a delegate from the Linn County area.

His civic life in Oregon went beyond the pulpit. Parrish served as a district judge — identified in the family biographical record as 'Judge in the California Company led by Capt. Saunders,' referring to his role during the crossing. He was also a founding trustee of the Jefferson Institute, one of the few explicitly non-sectarian educational institutions of the territorial era. At a meeting at Conser's Ferry in February 1856, when the president was absent, Parrish was elected chairman pro tem; the trustees that day resolved that no more than one-fourth of the board should belong to any one denomination — a principled commitment to independence from ecclesiastical control that Parrish, as chairman, gave his name to.

> *The Jefferson Institute was a notable civic achievement in early Oregon. Its founding commitment to non-sectarian governance was unusual for the period, when most educational institutions were affiliated with specific Protestant denominations. Parrish's involvement as a trustee and acting chairman reflects a man who could operate across denominational lines — a quality consistent with his Methodist Protestant background, which emphasized democratic church governance over episcopal hierarchy.*

By the time the family settled permanently in Linn County, their ties to the Nickerson family had grown significant. In October 1870, Parrish's granddaughter, Ellen Robb, married Henry T. Propst. However, of even greater genealogical importance was the earlier marriage of Parrish's daughter, Serepta, to Hugh Nickerson.

Though Serepta passed away in Albany on June 10, 1862, her marriage established Parrish as Hugh Nickerson's father-in-law. Through this lineage, Parrish was the grandfather of the Nickerson children, firmly anchoring them within the broader Propst and Burnett family networks.

A family note written in July 1867 recorded a detail about the 1844 crossing that sheds light on the family's network: 'Evans Parrish who died on the way to Oregon, leaving his dear family to plod their weary way to this far off land as best they could' — a reference to a brother of Edward Evans Parrish who perished on the trail. The family losses were thus not confined to the accounts of strangers.

DEATH: OCTOBER 24, 1874

Rev. Edward Evans Parrish died on Sunday, October 24, 1874 — the Weekly Oregon Statesman specified the date as 'On Sunday, Oct. 25, at the residence of his son-in-law, S. B.

Knox, near Albany.' He was eighty-two years and eleven months old. The official memorial record gives his death date as October 24.

He was buried at Knox Butte Cemetery near Albany, Linn County. His headstone reads: 'Rev Edward Evans Parrish, Sr. — 1791–1874 — Oregon Pioneer of 1844.'

At his funeral, there were five children and twenty-one grandchildren of the deceased present — a remarkable attendance that speaks to both the size of his family and the depth of their presence in Linn County.

The Albany Register for October 30, 1874, ran a tribute under the heading 'Another Pioneer Gone,' noting that Oregon had lost one of her oldest pioneers: a man who had reached the ripe old age of eighty-three and who, with the nerve and energy requisite for so hazardous an undertaking, had come to the Pacific slope when 'all this vast region was a howling wilderness, filled with wild beasts and the more dangerous and wily savage.'

> *The obituary language was conventional for the period, but the tribute's emphasis on Parrish's foundational role in Oregon's settlement reflects a genuine recognition. He had arrived in 1844, when permanent American settlement of the Willamette Valley was barely established. His thirty years of ministry, farming, judicial service, and civic work in Linn County placed him among the generation that built the institutional fabric of the state.*

SUMMARY

Edward Evans Parrish was a West Virginia-born Methodist Protestant minister who spent his working life on the frontier edge of American expansion — first across the Ohio circuits, then in the wagon train that crossed the continent in 1844, then in thirty years of farming, preaching, and civic work in Linn County, Oregon. He died at eighty-two, one of the oldest of Oregon's pioneer generation, and was buried at Knox Butte in the community he had helped to build.

The diary he kept on the 1844 crossing is the most vivid record of his inner life that survives. It is a document of practical piety and frontier pragmatism — a man who prayed for fair weather but traveled on Sunday when conditions demanded it, who mourned the waste of forty thousand pounds of buffalo meat while noting the Indians were probably innocent of the theft of the cattle, who recorded his daughter's broken leg with the restrained grief of a man who had seen harder things. His summary of the journey, written nineteen years later,

spoke of a territory transformed beyond recognition and closed with the expression of a man who had been part of that transformation: 'O, lovely Oregon!'

His connection to the broader family network that is the subject of this genealogical research runs through his daughter Serepta, whose marriage to Hugh Nickerson linked the Parrish line to the Nickerson family of Linn County — and through them, via Ellen Robb Nickerson Propst and her daughter Daisy May Propst Burnett, to the Burnett/Propst/Haley network whose histories are the subject of this project.

NOTE ON CONFLICTING RECORDS

Several sources give slightly different dates for Parrish's death. The Weekly Oregon Statesman death notice specifies 'Sunday, Oct. 25' while the Methodist conference record and the Ancestry/Find A Grave memorial consistently give October 24.

The Albany Register tribute describes him as being of 'the M.E. Church,' while conference records identify him as Methodist Protestant. This may reflect the merger trajectory of those denominations in the post-Civil War period, or simply imprecision in the obituary language.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Commission on Archives and History, East Ohio Conference, United Methodist Church — Ministerial Records, p. 521: PARRISH, EDWARD E. 1791–1874.

Estate of Edward E. Parrish — Notice to Creditors, Linn County, Oregon; S. B. Knox, Administrator; Geo. R. Helm, Attorney; January 1875.

Newspaper Sources

Weekly Oregon Statesman (Salem, Oregon) • May 11, 1852 (beet notice, Marion County farm) • May 18, 1852 (marriage of Rebecca S. Parrish to Samuel E. May) • Mar. 11, 1856 (Jefferson Institute, Parrish as chairman pro tem) • Sep. 28, 1858 (Oregon M.P. Conference, sixth session) • Oct. 31, 1874 (death notice: 'Sunday Oct. 25, at residence of son-in-law S. B. Knox, near Albany, aged eighty-two years and eleven months')

The Albany Register (Albany, Oregon) • Oct. 30, 1874 ('Another Pioneer Gone' — tribute to Rev. Edward Parrish, aged eighty-three; funeral notice: five children and twenty-one grandchildren present)

Albany Democrat (Albany, Oregon) • Jan. 15, 1875 (estate notice to creditors, S. B. Knox Administrator)

Family and Genealogical Sources

Parrish, Edward Evans. The Oregon Trail — Diary of Rev. Edward Evans Parrish in 1844 (summary, family collection).

Find A Grave Memorial No. 6511877 — Rev. Edward Evans Parrish, Sr., Knox Butte Cemetery, Albany, Linn County, Oregon.

'Notes for Rev Edward Evans Parrish-Judge' — (Ancestry.com, family tree 40074564) — Parrish family researcher notes; Riverside Cemetery WPA survey; biographical summary from diary.

'Notes for Rev Edward Evans Parrish-Judge' (page 2) — family notes on Heshbon Parrish, Dr. Edward Evans Parrish (1852–1925).

Grandchildren article — Corvallis, Oregon, March 27, 2009 — family account by Linda Lemons Bardell; 1844 Oregon Trail wagon train; Knox Butte burial confirmed.

Headstone photograph — 'Rev Edward Evans Parrish, Sr. 1791–1874 Oregon Pioneer of 1844,' Knox Butte Cemetery, Albany, Linn County, Oregon (family collection / uploaded source PDF).

HUGH NICKERSON

Oregon Pioneer • Farmer

OHIO • OREGON

Also known as: Hugh D. Nickerson • H. Nickerson

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	October 3, 1818, Zanesville, Morgan County, Ohio
DIED	August 22, 1896, Salem, Oregon (age 77)
BURIAL	City Cemetery, Albany, Linn County, Oregon
FATHER	Hugh Nickerson (1786–1845)
MOTHER	Rebecca Blanchard (1785–1836)
FIRST MARRIAGE	May 6, 1841, Morgan County, Ohio, to Serepta Parish (1823–1862)
SECOND MARRIAGE	March 28, 1864, Noble, Ohio, to Susan Jane Devine (1842–1881)
THIRD MARRIAGE	March 29, 1883, Albany, Oregon, to Elizabeth Melvina Donaghe (1826–1903)
CHILDREN	With Serepta Parrish: Vilinda Elizabeth Nickerson (1844–1906) Pernina Jane Nickerson (1849–1850) Ellen Robb Nickerson (1855–1943) With Susan Jane Devine: Olive Nickerson (1865–1876) Elmer Nickerson (1871–1946) Hattie Nickerson (1873–1875) Oneita Nickerson (1878–1945)
SIBLINGS	Mahala Nickerson (1808–1890) Lusa Eliza Blanchard Nickerson (1811–1894) Sparrow Mayo Nickerson (1812–1892) Lurana Nickerson (1815–1877) Joseph Nickerson (1816–1907) Rebecca Nickerson (1820–1896)

	Laura Nickerson (1823–1824) Celesta Celestia Nickerson (1825–1850) Simon Allen Nickerson (1827–1902)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Hugh Nickerson was born on October 3, 1818 near Zanesville in Morgan County, Ohio, into a family whose American roots stretched back to the Massachusetts Puritans. His parents, Hugh and Rebecca (Blanchard) Nickerson, had emigrated from Massachusetts and Connecticut respectively to Ohio in 1815, when settlers there were few and far apart. The family established itself in the carpenter's trade; Hugh Jr. worked alongside his father from boyhood and received only a limited formal education.

A 1915 reminiscence in the Oregon Daily Journal, contributed by a neighbor who had made the overland journey at the same time, remembered Hugh Nickerson as one of the Linn County pioneers who settled on the Albany prairie in the early 1850s. That account also noted that the Nickerson family claimed Mayflower-era ancestry — a point repeated in an 1896 Albany Democrat notice observing that the Nickersons traced their lineage back to the Plymouth colony.

At twenty-one years old, Hugh married Sarepta Parish — daughter of Edward Parish, an Oregon pioneer of 1847 — in Morgan County, Ohio, on May 6, 1841. The certified marriage record, issued from the Court of Common Pleas, Probate Division, Morgan County, Ohio, confirms the date and officiant. Sarepta preceded him in death in 1862. Together they had three children: Valinda (Belinda), Pernina Jane (died in infancy) and Ellen Robb.

After Sarepta's death, Hugh married Susan Jane Devine in Noble Ohio. Susan also preceded him in death in 1881. Together they had four children: Olive, Elmer, Hattie and Oneita (Nettie).

The History of Oregon biographical entry on Hugh Nickerson, written while he was still alive, described him as 'well-preserved and active' at seventy-four and 'apparently destined to enjoy many years of peaceful contentment.' He did not.

OHIO AND THE OVERLAND JOURNEY TO OREGON (TO 1851)

For the first thirty-odd years of his adult life, Hugh Nickerson was a carpenter in the Zanesville Ohio area, working at his trade and raising his family. In 1851, he joined what the History of Oregon described as the westward tide of emigration: purchasing a wagon and five yoke of cattle, gathering his family and earthly possessions, and joining the overland trail to Oregon.

A neighbor who made the same journey with her family later recalled traveling alongside the Nickersons. Their wagon cover bore the painted legend 'All the way from Pike County, Missouri.' They joined at least a dozen different parties on the crossing but found them quarrelsome and difficult. The men were greasing wagons or mending harnesses in the evenings while women baked and mended; children played around campfires or listened to old men telling stories. Bathing was a serious problem — there was often little or no opportunity for weeks at a time.

The party crossed the Cascades by the Barlow Trail, with the Nickerson boys going ahead to Portland to secure land for the family while the wagons came over the mountains. They settled at last near what is now Lebanon — there was only one house at that location when they arrived.

> *The 1851 overland crossing was one of the heaviest years of emigration on the Oregon Trail, following the California Gold Rush of 1849. Families from Ohio and the upper Midwest formed a significant portion of that wave. The route over the Cascades via the Barlow Road, opened in 1846, avoided the dangerous river passage down the Columbia.*

LINN COUNTY: FARMING AND CIVIC LIFE (1851–1890)

Hugh Nickerson arrived in Linn County, Oregon, in the autumn of 1851, proceeding from Oregon City to the Albany prairie, where he purchased a claim for 320 acres of land three and a half miles east of Albany. He set to work improving it — building a frame house, then barns and fences — and farmed that land until 1876. He then rented the farm, moved to the upper Santiam country, and purchased a sawmill and 240 acres of timber. The mill operated about four years before he retired from it. Returning to Albany, he purchased ten acres in the southern part of the city and built a spacious residence.

By the late 1860s the newspaper record begins to catch up with him. In October 1868 he was drawn as a juror for the Linn County Circuit Court. The Albany Register for August 1869

identified him as one of the county's best farmers — he had harvested twenty-five hundred bushels of wheat from one hundred acres, a yield the paper called 'pretty fair' given the unfavorable season. In March 1870, the same paper reported that he had received $1,070 from the Pioneer Oil Company of Salem for his flax crop from thirty-eight acres — just over $28 per acre.

Flax was more than a sideline for Nickerson. A March 1870 letter to the Albany Register specifically credited him, along with a partner, with having jointly imported from California some seventy-five pounds of East India flax seed several years earlier and with having sowed and re-sowed it annually. The Oregonian of February 1872 went further, identifying Nickerson as the man who five years earlier had first introduced flaxseed to Linn County, and reporting his claim that alternating flax and wheat produced a superior article of wheat.

> *The Pioneer Oil Company of Salem was one of several operations attempting to develop Oregon's flax fiber and linseed oil industry in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Nickerson's role as a seed importer and early adopter placed him among the agricultural experimenters of the period — men who were consciously trying to diversify Oregon's farm economy beyond wheat.*

His civic presence was continuous throughout these years. He appeared on jury lists in 1868 and 1885, and was listed among Linn County's largest taxpayers in January 1874, paying $106.20 annually — placing him in recognizable company with the county's established landowners. In September 1858 he had appeared as a delegate from the Linn County area to the sixth session of the Oregon annual conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, held at Jefferson — a detail that places his church affiliation firmly in the Protestant mainstream of the period.

Sarepta Parrish Nickerson died in Albany on June 10, 1862; the cause of death is not recorded in surviving sources. Hugh remarried in March 1864, marrying Susan Jane Devine.

In October 1870, Hugh's daughter Ellen Robb Nickerson married Henry T. Propst at the bride's parents' residence in Linn County — a union the Albany Register noted with warm wishes for a long and fruitful life. It would prove the most consequential event of that decade for the broader family network, linking the Nickersons to the Propst line that runs through this research. In March 1873 the Albany Register recorded, with its usual brevity in such matters, that a daughter had been born to Mrs. Hugh Nickerson on the 12th — this was Hattie,

the third child of Hugh and Susan Jane Devine, who did not survive childhood (died October 22, 1875).

Nearly a decade later, Susan Jane Devine Nickerson died in Albany on September 9, 1881; the cause of death is not recorded in surviving sources. Hugh married for the third time Mrs. E. M. Walker (Elizabeth Melvina Donaghe) in March 1883 — at his residence one mile south of Albany.

The History of Oregon biographical entry, written around 1892, describes Nickerson as a man who, after four years operating his Santiam sawmill, 'came to Albany, purchased ten acres in the southern part of the city, built a spacious residence, convenient outbuildings, etc., and here he has since lived, enjoying the fruits of his years of labor.' The portrait is of a man comfortably settled in prosperous retirement. What followed was quite different.

SEPARATION, LEGAL TROUBLES, AND DECLINE (1890–1896)

The final years of Hugh Nickerson's life were marked by the progressive unraveling of the prosperity and standing he had built over four decades in Linn County. In September 1890, he and his third wife moved to Milton in Umatilla County, east of the Cascades — the Albany Democrat-Herald reported the relocation as a health measure for Elizabeth, though the move also took them far from the Albany community Hugh had lived in for nearly forty years. By August 1894 the marriage had broken down entirely. Hugh placed a public notice in the Albany Weekly Herald warning creditors not to extend her any credit on his account, stating she had left his bed and board — a standard legal device to protect property in cases of separation, but one that made the rupture a matter of public record.

Elizabeth filed for divorce the following June, alleging desertion and cruel treatment and asking for an allowance of $2,500. The case worked its way through the Linn County courts over the next several months. Judge Hewitt rendered his decision in January 1896, finding the facts substantially as the plaintiff had charged. Elizabeth was granted one-third of the real property — the entire estate was valued at $10,000 — and the court dismissed an "ante-nuptial" contract Hugh had offered as a defense. By that point Hugh himself, described in the papers as having come from eastern Oregon, had already been committed to the state asylum at Salem. W. H. Goltra was appointed guardian of his person and estate, posting a bond of $2,000, and an inventory filed shortly afterward placed his remaining property at $8,475 in real estate and $3,022.85 personal.

In the late 1800s commitment of an elderly, respected person was common. Care for diseases such as Dementia or Alzheimer's disease did not exist at the time, so the common option was to commit them to an asylum.

Commitment to the Oregon State Insane Asylum required a formal proceeding before the county court. The Albany Democrat's 1896 obituary notes that 'disease and a complication of troubles affected his mind and he was taken to the asylum several months ago for treatment.'

The Albany Democrat noted that the Nickersons traced their ancestry back to the Plymouth colony.

DEATH: AUGUST 22, 1896

Hugh Nickerson died at the Oregon State Insane Asylum in Salem on Saturday afternoon, August 22, 1896. He was seventy-seven years old. The formal notification from the asylum — a brief letter dated August 24th from Superintendent D. A. Paine to the County Judge of Umatilla County — recorded the cause of death as senile exhaustion and confirmed that he had been committed from that county on January 19, 1896.

Three newspapers covered his death. The Statesman Journal gave his age as 77 years, 10 months, and 19 days, and noted that he had crossed the plains to Oregon in 1851 and settled on a farm near Albany which he still owned at the time of his death. It identified him as 'one of Linn county's most substantial citizens for forty-five years.' The Capital Journal described him more briefly as having lived forty-five years on a farm near Albany. The Albany Weekly Herald's fuller account noted that he had come from Ohio in 1852, had been prominent in the county, and that disease had deranged his mind — adding that a wife from whom he had separated survived him.

His remains were brought to Albany by train and interred in the city cemetery. W. H. Goltra, who had been serving as executor of his estate, filed the will — made in 1890 — in September 1896. The will provided for the education and support of his two youngest children, Elmer and Nettie, until they came of age, the support of his wife (the estranged Elizabeth), and the eventual division of the estate among his surviving children. Final settlement of the estate was heard by the Linn County court in July 1899.

> *The discrepancy in the accounts of when Nickerson arrived in Oregon — 1851 or 1852 — likely reflects the difference between when he left Ohio and when he arrived at his Linn County claim. The*

> *overland journey itself took approximately six months; a family departing in the spring of 1851 would have arrived in the Willamette Valley in late autumn of the same year. Both dates may be technically accurate for different points in the journey.*

CONNECTION TO THE PROPST FAMILY

The primary link between Hugh Nickerson and the Burnett/Propst/Haley family network runs through his daughter Ellen (Ella) Robb Nickerson, who married Henry T. Propst of Linn County on October 30, 1870. Henry T. Propst was a stock dealer in eastern Oregon, and the couple are mentioned in the History of Oregon biographical entry on Hugh Nickerson, where Ellen is identified as 'wife of Taylor Propst, a stock dealer in eastern Oregon.' Their descendants include the Propst line that connects to Daisy May Propst, wife of Melbourne L. Burnett.

The Albany Weekly Herald's 1896 obituary notice lists among Hugh's surviving children 'Mrs. Ella Probst' — a variant spelling of Propst that appears in several sources — confirming the connection. The Statesman Journal's notice gives the same name as 'Mrs. Ella Probst.' Hugh Nickerson is thus the father-in-law of Henry T. Propst and the grandfather of the generation whose westward migrations into the Columbia Plateau and Walla Walla country form the subject of parallel biographical entries in this research.

SUMMARY

Hugh Nickerson was an Ohio carpenter who crossed the plains in 1851 and spent forty-five years as one of Linn County's substantial farmers and citizens. He arrived with a family and five yoke of cattle, claimed 320 acres on the Albany prairie, farmed wheat and flax with real competence — introducing the flaxseed crop to the county and earning recognition in the agricultural press — and retired in modest prosperity. He was a Methodist, a juror, a taxpayer of note, a man the History of Oregon thought well-preserved and likely to live many more years.

The final decade of his life undid much of that picture. A marriage ended in separation and a divorce action alleging desertion and cruelty. Disease, described by the newspapers as compounded by a complication of troubles, affected his mind. He was committed to the Oregon State Insane Asylum from Umatilla County in January 1896. He died there on August 22nd of that year, at seventy-seven years of age, the official cause given as senile exhaustion.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certified Copy of Marriage Record — Hugh Nickerson and Sarepta Parish, Morgan County, Ohio, May 6, 1841; Vol. B, Page 22; certified April 11, 1974, Forest A. MacDonald, Judge.

Letter, Oregon State Insane Asylum — D. A. Paine, Superintendent, to County Judge, Umatilla County, Oregon, August 24, 1896: death of Hugh Nickerson, committed January 19, 1896, died August 22, 1896, cause: senile exhaustion.

Newspaper Sources

Albany Democrat • 10 Oct 1868 (jury list, Linn County Circuit Court, term commencing 26 Oct 1868) • 30 Mar 1883 (marriage notice, Hugh Nickerson and Mrs. E. M. Walker, at groom's residence one mile south of Albany, Rev. D. W. Cameron officiating) • 20 Feb 1885 (jury list, Circuit Court, Albany, term commencing 9 Mar 1885) • 14 Jun 1895 (Elizabeth M. Nickerson files divorce suit; alleges desertion and cruel treatment, asks $2,500) • 31 Jan 1896 (divorce granted; facts found as charged; ante-nuptial contract held no binding effect) • 14 Feb 1896 (Hugh Nickerson, formerly of Albany, taken to the asylum at Salem from Eastern Oregon) • 28 Feb 1896 (estate inventory filed: real property $8,475, personal $3,022.85) • 19 Jun 1896 (death of Rebecca Goodrich, sister of Hugh Nickerson, Sharon, Noble County, Ohio, June 1, age 76; Nickersons trace ancestry to Plymouth colony)

Albany Democrat-Herald • 26 Sep 1890 (removal to Milton, Umatilla County, for Mrs. Nickerson's health)

Albany Weekly Herald • 6 Sep 1894 (public notice by Hugh Nickerson disavowing debts of Elizabeth M. Nickerson, dated 16 Aug 1894) • 20 Jun 1895 (court notice, Elizabeth M. Nickerson vs Hugh Nickerson, divorce) • 25 Jul 1895 (divorce proceedings; H. N. Frazier appointed to take testimony of defendant) • 28 Nov 1895 (divorce case argued and taken under advisement) • 30 Jan 1896 (Judge Hewitt grants divorce; Elizabeth awarded one-third of real property, estate valued at $10,000) • 20 Feb 1896 (W. H. Goltra appointed guardian of person and estate of Hugh Nickerson; bond $2,000) • 27 Aug 1896 (obituary; came from Ohio 1852; prominent resident; disease deranged his mind; four children named) • 10 Sep 1896 (executor's notice, W. H. Goltra, estate of Hugh Nickerson; attorneys Montanye & Hackleman) • 22 Apr 1897 (marriage of Clarence Dubruille and Nettie Nickerson, daughter of the late Hugh Nickerson, Catholic church, Albany)

The Albany Register • 21 Aug 1869 (wheat harvest, 2,500 bushels from 100 acres) • 5 Mar 1870 (letter from E. Cartwright on flax seed; credits Nickerson and Houston as importers of East India seed) • 12 Mar 1870 (flax crop payment, $1,070 from Pioneer Oil Company of Salem, 38 acres) • 5 Nov 1870 (marriage notice, Henry T. Propst and Ellen R. Nickerson, 30 Oct 1870) • 14 Mar 1873 (birth notice, daughter born 11 Mar to wife of Hugh Nickerson) • 17 Jan 1874 (list of Linn County's largest taxpayers; Hugh Nickerson, $106.20)

The Capital Journal (Salem, Oregon) • 24 Aug 1896 (death notice; died Oregon asylum for the insane, August 22, age 77; lived 45 years on farm near Albany)

The Lebanon Express • 10 Sep 1896 (will of Hugh Nickerson, made 1890, filed by executor W. H. Goltra; bonds $16,000; provides for education and support of Elmer and Nettie and support of wife) • 24 Sep 1896 (all property of Hugh Nickerson, insane, ordered turned over to executor)

Oregon Daily Journal • 9 Jun 1915 (reminiscence of 1851 overland journey by neighbor; Hugh Nickerson family referenced as fellow travelers)

The Oregonian • 8 Feb 1872 (flax farming; Nickerson credited with introducing flaxseed to Linn County five years prior)

The People's Press • 2 Jun 1899 (executor's notice of final settlement, estate of Hugh Nickerson; hearing set 3 Jul 1899, county court, Albany)

Statesman Journal (Salem, Oregon) • 25 Aug 1896 (death notice; age 77 years 10 months 19 days; crossed plains 1851; one of Linn county's most substantial citizens for forty-five years; four children named)

Weekly Oregon Statesman (Salem, Oregon) • 28 Sep 1858 (sixth session, Oregon annual conference, Methodist Protestant Church; Hugh Nickerson listed as delegate)

Family and Genealogical Sources

History of Oregon — biographical entry on Hugh Nickerson, p. 759 (c. 1892).

FRANCIS MARION MCCOY

Civil War Veteran • Farmer

ILLINOIS • MISSOURI • COLORADO • OKLAHOMA TERRITORY • OREGON

Also known as: F. M. McCoy • Frank McCoy • Uncle Mac

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	January 16, 1838, Pike County, Illinois
DIED	August 14, 1916, Lebanon, Linn County, Oregon (age 78)
BURIAL	Lebanon, Oregon
FATHER	John McCoy (1795–1876)
MOTHER	Sarah Duncan (1801–1883)
FIRST MARRIAGE	October 26, 1856, Missouri, to Elizabeth Jane Carpenter (1839–1857)
SECOND MARRIAGE	May 9, 1858, to Serena ("Sarah") Frances Carpenter (1838–1884)
THIRD MARRIAGE	December 21, 1884, Daviess County, Missouri, to Jane E. Shafer (Mrs. Jane E. Pomfret) (1848–1891)
FOURTH MARRIAGE	December 1892, to Martha A. Scott (divorced May 7, 1897)
FIFTH MARRIAGE	October 16, 1898, Vernon, Wilbarger County, Texas, to Harriet (Hattie) Catherine Birdwell Haley (1848–1921)
CIVIL WAR SERVICE	Co. D, 27th Missouri Infantry; enlisted September 17, 1862, Breckinridge, Missouri; mustered out at Washington, D.C., June 13, 1865
CHILDREN	By Elizabeth Jane Carpenter (one child): Mary Francis McCoy (1857–1925) By Serena Frances Carpenter (eight children): Salissa (Selasa) Jane McCoy (1859–1863) Jesse McCoy (1860–1934) John C. McCoy (1861–1943) William Marion McCoy (1863–1944) Clara McCoy Carlton (1866–1954) Cory Ann McCoy Cowan (1868–1931)

	George Gala McCoy (1871–1873) Armada May McCoy (1872–1937) By Jane E. Shafer (one child): Harry R. McCoy (1886–1959, of Lebanon, Oregon)
SIBLINGS	Jacob Thomas McCoy (1821–1860) Jessie T. McCoy (1826–1862) Mary A Mccoy (1834–Deceased) Rolin McCoy (1840–1862) Lydia J Mccoy (1844–Deceased)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Francis Marion McCoy was born on January 16, 1838, in Pike County, Illinois, the fourth of six children of John McCoy (1795–1876) and Sarah Duncan (1801–1883). His parents had married on November 12, 1835, in Warren County, Illinois — though his older siblings Jacob Thomas (b. 1821), Jessie T. (b. 1826), and Mary A. (b. 1834) all predate that marriage, suggesting either a second marriage for one or both parents or an earlier informal union later regularized. Two younger siblings, Rolin (1840–1862) and Lydia J. (b. 1844), followed Francis. He was named, like many boys of his generation, for the hero of the Carolinas in the Revolution — the "Swamp Fox," Francis Marion — and the name fit a man who would, in his middle twenties, march through Georgia with Sherman.

He lived in Pike County until he was seventeen, when he went to Bates County, Missouri. The move marked the start of a westward life that carried him through five states and one territory before he settled, finally, in Oregon. He was three times a widower, once divorced, and five times married before he was sixty-one. He lost two of his children in childhood — Salissa Jane in 1863 and George Gala in 1873 — and outlived all but the last of his wives. By the end he had ten children born to him across three of his marriages, and eight still living.

> *Pike County, Illinois, in the 1830s and 1840s was prairie country newly settled by families from Kentucky, Tennessee, and the older Ohio Valley settlements. The migration pattern that took young men from Pike County to the Missouri counties west of the Mississippi was so well established that "Pike County" became, in California gold-rush parlance, a generic name for any westering Midwesterner. The McCoy family's move from Illinois to Bates County, Missouri, in the mid-1850s was entirely typical of that current.*

The first marriage record of his life — to Elizabeth Jane Carpenter on October 26, 1856 — places him in the Missouri country at eighteen years old. Elizabeth was about a year his senior, born in 1839. She bore him a daughter, Mary Francis McCoy, on a date close enough to her own death that the two events were almost certainly linked: Elizabeth died on December 15, 1857, fourteen months after the wedding; Mary Francis lived until 1925. Five months after Elizabeth's death, on May 9, 1858, Francis married Serena Frances Carpenter (1838–1884), who shared a birth year with Elizabeth (his first wife) and may well have been her sister or close kin. Serena went by "Sarah" within the family. With her he had eight children over the next fourteen years, beginning with Salissa Jane in 1859 and ending with Armada May in 1872. Two of those eight children — Salissa Jane (d. 1863, age four) and George Gala (d. 1873, age two) — were the deaths recorded in the family bible.

> *The bible record copied by the Walla Walla notary in 1918 lists three of Francis's wives — Elizabeth Jane, Sirena F., and Jane E. — and the deaths of two children, plus his parents. The pension office's later worksheet adds two further marriages (to Martha A. and Harriet C.). Serena's recorded death year of 1884 falls on the same date as the third marriage to Jane E. (Pomfret) Shafer in December 1884, suggesting Francis remarried promptly after Serena's death.*

CIVIL WAR: CO. D, 27TH MISSOURI INFANTRY (1862–1865)

On September 17, 1862, Francis M. McCoy enlisted at Breckinridge, Missouri, in Company D of the 27th Missouri Volunteer Infantry. (A later Index to Compiled Military Service Records gives the enlistment as 1 September 1862 at St. Louis, Missouri — most likely the regiment's formal muster-in date and place rather than McCoy's recruiting station; the Company Descriptive Book and McCoy's own later recollections both name Breckinridge and September 17th.) The Compiled Military Service Record describes him then: twenty-four years old, six feet tall, fair complexion, blue eyes, light hair, a farmer by occupation, born in Illinois. He signed on for a three-year term and served the full length of it.

His war was, by the muster rolls, mostly the war of the wagons. From November 1862 through the spring of 1865 he was repeatedly detached to the Quartermaster Department of the 2nd Division — first as a teamster, then for stretches as a wagonmaster, and in his final months as an ambulance driver. The Tennessee campaign of mid-1863, the Atlanta campaign of 1864, and the March to the Sea were carried on his books as duty in the supply train. The men who drove the wagons did not write the histories, but they kept the army moving.

> *The 27th Missouri Infantry was raised in 1862 and assigned to the XV Corps of Sherman's Army of the Tennessee. The regiment fought at Vicksburg, Lookout Mountain, and Missionary Ridge, then participated in the Atlanta campaign of 1864 and Sherman's March to the Sea. John A. Logan — the corps commander McCoy's obituaries took pride in naming — was one of the most prominent political generals of the war, later a U.S. senator and Republican vice-presidential nominee. A soldier serving under Logan from Vicksburg through Bentonville had been at the heart of the western theater for the entire war.*

His own later recollections, as captured in the Lebanon Express's 1915 birthday notice and the Oregon Daily Journal's 1916 anniversary feature, dwelt on the marquee actions: the capture of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863; the battle of Lookout Mountain; Missionary Ridge; the Atlantic campaign that began at Resaca, Georgia, in the spring of 1864 and ended with the fall of Atlanta in October; the start of the March to the Sea on November 16, 1864; the arrival at Savannah on December 27th. The newspapers reproduced a portrait of McCoy in his veteran years — full beard, level gaze, the bearing of a man who had been at all of it. He was mustered out at Washington, D.C., on June 13, 1865 (one source says June 22nd), and went home to Missouri.

MISSOURI, COLORADO, AND OKLAHOMA TERRITORY (1865–1912)

After the war Francis McCoy returned to Missouri and resumed farming. The Daviess County marriage record for December 21, 1884, shows him taking a license to marry "Mrs. Jane E. Pomfret" at Gallatin, Missouri — a third marriage, contracted at the age of forty-six. Her maiden name was Shafer, born 1848; "Pomfret" was the surname of an earlier husband. The family bible recorded her own name as "Jane E. Marion E. Pomfret (name dim)," the notary noting that the entry was the only one not in the bible's primary handwriting. Jane bore him one son — Harry R. McCoy — in 1886, the boy who would in time become the informant on his father's Oregon death certificate. The bible records Jane's death on March 13, 1891, when Harry was about five years old.

By the pension office's reckoning, Francis married a fourth time — in December 1892 — to a woman named Martha A. Scott. The marriage was childless, and she was no longer his wife by May 7, 1897, the date the pension worksheet records the divorce. The bible, kept by Harriet, never recorded this marriage. The 1890s were Francis's most turbulent years: a fifty-year-old widower with a young son to raise, moving westward across the plains, marrying briefly and

not well. By the time he reached his fifth and final marriage in 1898, he was sixty years old and had lived enough lives for several men.

From Missouri he went, by his own obituary's account, to Colorado, where he lived for six years. From Colorado he went to Oklahoma — which would have meant Oklahoma Territory in the 1890s, before statehood — where he lived for eighteen years and put down the deepest set of roots of any of his stops along the way. The newspaper trail picks him up firmly at Olustee, in Greer County (later Jackson County), Oklahoma Territory, by the early 1900s, and from there it is continuous.

On October 16, 1898, at Vernon in Wilbarger County, Texas — just across the Red River from the Greer County country — Francis Marion McCoy married Harriet C. Haley, the widow of Benjamin Franklin Haley, who had died in Virginia in June 1895. Vernon was a regional commercial center for the southwestern Oklahoma settlements, and a Texas wedding for a couple who would settle on the Oklahoma side of the river was not unusual. Harriet brought with her at least three living children: Benjamin Thomas (B. T.) Haley, William Henry (W. H.) Haley, and a daughter, Mary Elizabeth, who would later marry R. W. Sharrett. The Haley boys and the McCoys would live as part of a single extended household for the rest of Francis's life. A February 1899 deed in Greer County records B. T. Haley and his wife Kate selling Virginia land to R. W. Sharrett "as Trustee, for the benefit of Harriet C. Haley, once the wife & widow of B. F. Haley, deceased, but now the wife of Francis McCoy of Oklahoma Ter." The phrasing places Harriet's remarriage and the family's reconstitution clearly on the record.

> *Greer County in the 1890s and 1900s was contested ground — claimed by both Texas and Oklahoma Territory until an 1896 Supreme Court ruling settled it as part of Oklahoma. Vernon, Texas, where Francis and Harriet were married in 1898, sat just south of the Red River and was the natural commercial and administrative town for both the southern Greer County country and the northern Texas Panhandle. The town of Olustee and the surrounding settlements at Willowvale, Carmel Township, and Elmer were the center of the broader Whicker–Haley–McCoy community in the early 1900s, and it is in their newspapers — the Olustee Outlook, Olustee Democrat, Altus Times, and Oklahoma Democrat — that Francis McCoy's daily life is best documented.*

He farmed near Olustee at Willowvale, and by 1907 the Olustee Outlook was describing him as "a well known and highly respected farmer" — quoting him directly: "I have been in this country for several years and although the conditions are fast getting better, yet we need more

people here to develop the land. I raise a good crop each year and I am glad to see alfalfa being grown by the farmers. I think this country is a fine alfalfa country." That December the same paper noted that he had erected "a nice wind mill over his well. Quite a convenience isn't it Uncle Mac." The nickname stuck — the editor used it again in April 1908: "Our old friend F. M. McCoy was in the capital Saturday. Uncle Mac wears the smile of prosperity nowadays. Come around often uncle Mac."

He was a Republican in a county where the Democrats generally held the upper hand, and he served his party faithfully. From 1908 through 1910 the Altus Times and Oklahoma Democrat repeatedly listed him as Republican Township Committeeman for Carmel Township; in February 1910 the Altus Times named him among the men who would "fill that position than many Democrats," along with Gus Kahle of Elmer. In May 1907 it was F. M. McCoy who signed the public notice calling all Republicans of Carmel Township to the Willowvale School House to elect delegates to the county convention. He had been a delegate, an organizer, and a judge in local debates — a May 1909 Olustee Democrat letter from the Willowvale Debating Society places him as a judge in the resolution "That Cain's wife was not a white woman," alongside W. T. Atterberry and E. E. Widner. The negative side won.

> *Rural debating societies were a fixture of frontier social life on the Southern Plains in the 1890s and 1900s, providing both entertainment and a venue for the practice of public argument. The topics ranged from the playful and theological — Cain's wife — to the contentious and political. McCoy's role as a judge place him among the more senior and respected figures in the Willowvale community.*

He kept fast horses. The Olustee Outlook for December 1905 reported that on Christmas Day his horse came in third in the three-eighths race behind Sid Parker's gray and Mangum Doll, with the Banks horse fourth. In April 1906 his horse came out ahead of Sid Parker's gray in the one-fourth dash at the spring meet. He was a familiar enough figure in the social columns that the paper noted his comings and goings with the casual warmth reserved for known characters: visiting Bill Haley and family, hosting Tom Haley and Billie Williams, paying calls on the Outlook offices, ordering subscriptions sent to relatives in Bristol, Virginia, attending to school district business with T. G. Compton after their building had been blown off its foundation twice in one year — first by the Snyder cyclone, then by a hailstorm. The neighbors had turned out for a day's work to set it right.

He had at least one entanglement with the courts. The June 1908 Oklahoma Democrat assignment of state cases for the June term lists "State of Oklahoma vs. F. M. McCoy" as case No. 19, slotted for trial Tuesday, June 10, 1908. No further coverage of the outcome has been located in surviving sources.

OREGON: LEBANON AND FINAL YEARS (1912–1916)

On May 4, 1912, Francis McCoy and Harriet arrived at Lebanon, Linn County, Oregon — the date provided to the Olustee Democrat in his obituary. He was seventy-four years old. He had spent eighteen years in Oklahoma; he would spend four in Oregon. The records of those four years are sparse but warm. He kept up his subscription to the Olustee Democrat for as long as his hand could write the dollar — the August 1913 issue noted with evident pleasure that "Our old friend F. M. McCoy of Lebanon, Oregon, sends in his dollar for the Democrat. His many friends here will be glad to hear that he is still hale and hearty." In December 1913 he was visiting his daughter Mrs. J. M. Cowan in Oklahoma. In January 1914 the Olustee Democrat noted he had left Monday for Lebanon, after "visiting relatives and old friends here for some weeks." He was a business visitor in Albany the same week.

His seventy-seventh and seventy-eighth birthdays were both noted in the Lebanon Express. The 1915 piece — "Veteran Celebrates Birthday" — is the fullest account of his war service ever published in his lifetime, with full dates: enlistment September 17, 1862, at Breckinridge; service to the end of the war under General John A. Logan; present at Vicksburg, Lookout Mountain, and Missionary Ridge; the capture of Atlanta and the march to the sea; discharge at Washington, D.C., June 22, 1865. The piece closes with the line "Of ten children born to him eight are living" — a bare statistic that sat at the foundation of his life. The 1916 Oregon Daily Journal feature, with photograph and headline "FRANCIS M. McCOY MARCHED TO SEA," was published on his seventy-eighth birthday, January 26th. Nearly seven months later, he was gone.

> *Lebanon, Oregon, in the 1910s was a small Willamette Valley farming town in Linn County, with a strong Christian Church congregation and an active Masonic lodge. McCoy's son Harry R. McCoy lived there as well — listed as "H. R. McCoy of Lebanon" in the 1916 obituary and as informant on the death certificate. The choice to retire to Lebanon at 74 placed him near family in his last years.*

DEATH: AUGUST 14, 1916

Francis Marion McCoy died at his home at 397 Main Street, Lebanon, Oregon, at 11:30 in the morning on Monday, August 14, 1916. He was seventy-eight years, six months, and twenty-nine days old. The Oregon death certificate, completed by the attending physician Dr. J. C. Booth, gave the principal cause of death as uremia, with diabetes mellitus listed as a contributory cause of many years' standing. A July 1916 note in the Lebanon Express had given the public hint of what was coming: "F. M. McCoy, a veteran of the civil war, is very ill at his home in this city. His daughter-in-law, Mrs. Harry McCoy, came yesterday from Walla Walla to attend his bedside."

Two obituaries appeared on August 24, 1916 — one in the Olustee Democrat, reprinted from the Lebanon Express, and a duplicate notice in the same Oklahoma paper. The headline read "FRANCIS M. McCOY PASSED AWAY YESTERDAY — Served Through the Civil War in Sherman's Army." The Lebanon Lodge of Masons had charge of the funeral, held at the Christian Church on Tuesday afternoon at two o'clock. He was buried in Lebanon. The plain granite stone in the cemetery there carries his name, his dates, 1838–1916, and the square-and-compasses of the Masonic order — the same fraternity that connected him, after a fashion, to so many of the men in the wider family network. (His stepson B. T. Haley would join the Milton-Freewater Masons in Oregon a decade later.)

> *Uremia in 1916 was the term used for what would now be called end-stage renal failure, and in a man with long-standing diabetes mellitus, the progression from diabetic nephropathy to uremic death was effectively untreatable in the era before insulin (introduced in 1922) and dialysis. McCoy's eight months of attended illness from January through August 1916 are entirely consistent with that diagnostic picture.*

His widow, Harriet C. McCoy, was left in possession of the family bible and the practical work of settling his affairs. The bible — printed in 1869 (with a copyright date of MDCCLXXVI, 1876) by S. W. Green of 18 Jacob Street, New York — contained a full record of marriages and deaths in his family back to 1856, and Harriet handed it over on November 13, 1918, to E. S. Nixon, a Walla Walla notary public, who copied the entries for her widow's pension claim. The notary, having compared the copy with the original, certified that all entries were in the same handwriting except the last, and that the record "has every appearance of being genuine and not having been tampered with in any manner."

ESTATE, PENSION, AND AFTERMATH

Estate proceedings opened quickly in two states. In Oklahoma, where McCoy had retained property, the Jackson County Court appointed C. C. Henry as administrator. A notice to creditors ran in the Oklahoma Democrat on May 31, 1917; a notice of sale of real estate at Elmer, Oklahoma, ran in the Times-Democrat on August 16, 1917; a final account and settlement notice ran on May 2, 1918, set down for hearing at Altus on May 21st. In Oregon, W. M. Brown was appointed administrator of the Linn County estate; the Albany Daily Democrat's October 31, 1916, brief noted that McCoy had died "leaving property valued at $500." An L. D. Porter v. Brown suit "to recover money" — $300 — was filed in January 1918 and worked through the Linn County Circuit Court for the rest of that year, the public summons running in the Albany Daily Democrat in late June 1918. The defendants named in the foreclosure included Harriet and most of the surviving McCoy children, indicating the suit concerned a 10-acre claim near Albany on which Francis and Harriet had taken out a mortgage in June 1914.

Harriet C. McCoy applied for a widow's pension based on her late husband's Civil War service. The pension office's index card preserves the record: invalid pension application No. 373,332, certificate No. 250,588, originally filed on June 8 [or 9], 1880; widow's application No. 1,106,463, certificate No. 863,717, filed August 28, 1917, from Washington State. A General Affidavit dated November 24, 1917, sworn in Walla Walla County by Benjamin T. Haley (aged 41) and William H. Haley (aged 33) — both giving their addresses as South 1st Street, Walla Walla — formally identified themselves as sons of Harriet C. McCoy by her former husband Benjamin F. Haley, who had died June 27, 1895, and at whose death they had been present. The affidavit was a routine document supporting Harriet's pension claim by establishing her prior marital history.

Harriet survived her second husband by five years. She died at Bristol, Virginia, in May 1921. Her obituary in the Bristol Herald Courier of May 9, 1921, listed her surviving children as B. T. Haley of Freewater, Oregon; W. H. Haley of Pasco, Washington; and Mrs. R. W. Sharrett of near Bristol — the same trio her McCoy second marriage had brought into Francis's household two decades earlier.

SUMMARY

Francis Marion McCoy was an Illinois farm boy who marched to the sea with Sherman, drove wagons through Georgia, lost two wives and divorced two more before he was sixty, raised ten children of whom eight outlived him, farmed in Missouri and Colorado and Oklahoma Territory, served the Republican Party of Carmel Township faithfully, raced his horses on Christmas Day, judged debates on whether Cain's wife was a white woman, sold subscriptions of the Olustee Democrat to relatives in Bristol, and finally — at seventy-four — boarded a train for Oregon and spent his last four years with his fifth wife near a son in Lebanon. The Olustee editor called him Uncle Mac and meant it kindly. The pension office, working from his sworn statements, recorded the more complicated outline of a long life: five marriages — to Elizabeth Jane Carpenter, to Serena Frances Carpenter, to Jane E. Shafer (Mrs. Pomfret), to Martha A. Scott, and at last to Harriet Catherine Birdwell Haley.

The portrait the Oregon Daily Journal printed on his seventy-eighth birthday — bearded, deep-eyed, in a high collar and dark coat — is the kind of photograph the great age of Civil War commemoration produced by the thousand. The Masons of Lebanon Lodge buried him in the Christian Church, and the granite stone in the Lebanon cemetery — square-and-compasses above his dates — gives no hint of the five marriages, the ten children, the wagons rolling toward Atlanta, or the windmill at Willowvale. It just says: FRANCIS M. McCOY • 1838 • 1916.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Francis Marion McCoy, State of Oregon, Linn County, Lebanon; Registered No. 29; principal cause: uremia; contributory: diabetes mellitus; physician Dr. J. C. Booth; informant Harry R. McCoy of Lebanon, Oregon; filed August 17, 1916.

U.S. Civil War Compiled Military Service Record (CMSR) — Francis M. McCoy, Private, Co. D, 27th Regiment, Missouri Infantry; enlisted September 17, 1862, Breckinridge, Missouri; mustered out at Washington, D.C., June 13, 1865; Company Descriptive Book and Returns.

Civil War Pension Index Card — McCoy, Francis M.; Co. D, 27th Mo. Inf.; widow Harriet C. McCoy; invalid app. No. 373,332 (cert. 250,588), filed June 1880; widow's app. No. 1,106,463 (cert. 863,717), filed August 28, 1917, from Washington.

Affidavit of Harriet C. McCoy — sworn before E. S. Nixon, Notary Public, Walla Walla County, Washington, December 17, 1918 — concerning the family bible record of Francis M. McCoy.

Notarial Certification of Family Bible Record — E. S. Nixon, Notary Public, Walla Walla County, Washington, November 13, 1918; bible printed by S. W. Green, 18 Jacob Street, New York, copyright 1869 (date MDCCLXXVI); transcription of marriages and deaths.

General Affidavit — Benjamin T. Haley and William H. Haley, sworn at Walla Walla, Washington, November 24, 1917; Pension Office filing date January 16, 1918.

McCoy genealogical worksheet — (handwritten, undated) — Pension Office annotations regarding prior marriages and divorces of soldier Francis M. McCoy.

Application for License to Marry — Francis M. McCoy and Mrs. Jane E. Pomfret, Daviess County, Missouri, December 21, 1884; license No. 149.

Deed — B. T. Haley and Kate Haley to R. W. Sharrett, Trustee for Harriet C. Haley ("now the wife of Francis McCoy"); Greer County, Oklahoma Territory, dated February 14, 1899; recorded Washington County, Virginia, June 4, 1900; Book 59, p. 299.

1866 Missouri State Census (partial) — Salem, [county], Francis M. McCoy, age 26, married, born Illinois; entry alongside McCoy, Rowland, age 21.

Index to Compiled Military Service Records — (Research by Harold Slavik) — Francis M. McCoy, Co. D, 27th Infantry, Missouri; Union; enlistment date 1 Sep 1862, St. Louis, Missouri (regimental muster); rank Private; survived war; last known residence and place of death Linn County, Oregon; burial Lebanon, Linn County, Oregon.

Newspaper Sources

The Lebanon Express (Lebanon, Oregon) • Jan 22, 1915 (“Veteran Celebrates Birthday”) • Aug 13, 1915 (free hunting and fishing license) • Jul 14, 1916 (illness notice) • Aug 1916 (obituary, reprinted Olustee Democrat)

The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, Oregon) • Jan 26, 1916 (“Francis M. M’Coy Marched to Sea,” with portrait)

The Olustee Democrat (Olustee, Oklahoma) • May 6, 1909 (Willowvale Debating Society) • Aug 28, 1913 (subscription renewal) • Jan 1, 1914 (visit notice) • Aug 24, 1916 (obituary, reprinted Lebanon Express)

The Olustee Outlook (Olustee, Oklahoma) • Dec 28, 1905 (Christmas races) • Jan 4, 1906 (school district matters, Willowvale) • Jan 11, 1906 (homestead witness, Notice for Publication) • Apr 5, 1906 (Saturday's races) • May 17, 1907 (Republican notice, Carmel Township) • May 31, 1907 (“a well known and highly respected farmer”) • Dec 13, 1907 (windmill notice) • Jan 30, 1908 (Haley/McCoy social note) • Feb 8, 1908 (Bristol, Virginia subscriptions) • Feb 20, 1908 (Sunday visitors) • Apr 30, 1908 (“Uncle Mac” notice)

The Altus Times (Altus, Oklahoma) • Jun 18, 1908 (Republican Township Committeemen, Carmel) • Feb 10, 1910 (“Lots of Good Party Material”) • Mar 24, 1910 (“Decide on a County Ticket”)

Oklahoma Democrat (Altus, Oklahoma) • Jun 11, 1908 (assignment of state cases, June term — State vs F. M. McCoy) • Sep 29, 1910 (cotton notice from Olustee) • May 31, 1917 (notice to creditors) • Aug 16, 1917 (notice of sale, Elmer) • May 2, 1918 (notice of settlement of account)

The Albany Democrat (Albany, Oregon) • Jan 6, 1914 (business visitor, Lebanon)

Albany Daily Democrat (Albany, Oregon) • Oct 31, 1916 (“Administrator Appointed”) • Jan 29, 1918 (“To Recover Money”) • Jun 28, 1918 (Summons No. 4607, Porter v. Brown)

Bristol Herald Courier (Bristol, Virginia) • May 9, 1921 (obituary of Mrs. Hattie [Birdwell] McCoy)

Family and Genealogical Sources

Gravestone photograph — Francis M. McCoy, 1838–1916, Masonic emblem, Lebanon, Oregon (family collection).

Portrait photograph — Francis M. McCoy, reproduced in The Oregon Daily Journal, January 26, 1916.

FamilySearch Family Tree — Francis Marion McCoy (Person ID 2WHJ-BPR); records of parents, siblings, five spouses, and ten children, with linked individual entries.

HOWARD LAWRENCE PROPST

Wheat Farmer • Variety Store Merchant

OREGON • SASKATCHEWAN • ALBERTA • WASHINGTON • OREGON • IDAHO

Also known as: H. L. Propst • Howard Propst • Howard L. Propst

VITAL STATISTICS

BORN	January 11, 1872, Albany, Linn County, Oregon
DIED	December 26, 1962, Orofino, Clearwater County, Idaho (age 90)
BURIAL	Crestview Mausoleum, Lewis-Clark Memorial Gardens, Lewiston, Idaho
FATHER	Henry Taylor Propst (1849–1929)
MOTHER	Ellen Robb Nickerson (1855–1943)
MARRIED	July 10, 1897, Gilliam County, Oregon, to Jessie May Davidson (1877–1965)
CHILDREN	None recorded
SIBLINGS	Frank Propst (1878–1878) Otis Wesley Propst (1880–1960) Daisy M. Propst (1897–1997)

> *Note on name variants: Howard is consistently identified as "H. L. Propst" throughout the surviving record — in the Oregon, Washington, Canadian, and Idaho newspapers, and in his 1962 Idaho death certificate.*

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Howard Lawrence Propst was born on January 11, 1872, in Albany, Oregon, the eldest son of Henry Taylor Propst and Ellen Robb Nickerson. He grew up in the farming country of Linn County, where his father had settled after crossing the plains as a toddler in 1852 and where his mother's family had been among the early Albany prairie pioneers. The two lines met at Howard's birth, giving him an Oregon pedigree that ran straight back to the Willamette Valley's founding generation.

He had three younger siblings. Frank, born 1878, died in infancy. Otis Wesley, born 1880, eventually settled in Lamoni, Iowa. Daisy May, born in 1897 when Howard was already twenty-

five and married, became the surprise late-life child whose arrival the Condon Globe celebrated with the observation that her father was "nearly tickled to death" — a notice that ran alongside the dry footnote that Howard L. Propst had written in asking the paper to be sure not to mix up the initials, as a lot of people had assumed the new baby was his. He wanted it known, the paper added, that it wasn't. The incident is a small but telling confirmation that by 1897, in the Gilliam County country where the family was then living, father and son were both established enough that their shared H. L. / H. T. initials caused genuine confusion among neighbors.

> *The shared-initials problem would prove to be a recurring theme in the historical record. In Alberta a decade and a half later, Henry would appear in the Edmonton press under the variant "J. L. Propst," while Howard continued to be reported as "H. L. Propst."*

GILLIAM COUNTY, OREGON: FIRST FARMING YEARS (C. 1895–1904)

By the mid-1890s, the Propsts had moved from the Willamette Valley to the dry wheat country of Gilliam County in north-central Oregon, settling at Clem and Matney near Condon. Howard was a young man in his twenties, just starting to build his own life on land of his own. The Condon Globe begins picking him up in the local record in 1897, the year of his marriage and his sister Daisy's birth, and his presence in those columns over the next several years gives the clearest single picture of who he was becoming.

On July 10, 1897, Howard married Jessie May Davidson in Gilliam County, Oregon — a marriage that, by the time of his death sixty-five years later, would have outlasted all of his careers and most of his peers.

In July 1898 he was installed as Sentry of the local Woodmen Camp. By March 1899 he was filing his own Homestead Entry No. 5326 for the southwest quarter of section 5, township 4 south, range 22 east — his own claim, on his own land. He drew jury duty for the April 1899 term of the Gilliam County Circuit Court (Clem), and again for the September 1901 term (Matney). In August 1899 he was elected Noble Grand of Summit Lodge No. 140, I.O.O.F. — the senior officer's chair in the local Odd Fellows lodge.

> *The pace of Howard's involvement in local civic and fraternal life during these years suggests a young man with both ambition and the social standing. The Odd Fellows in particular would become a lifelong affiliation; at his death sixty-three years later, he would be honored as a seventy-*

> *year member of the Lodge, meaning his membership dated to roughly 1892, while he was still in his early twenties.*

The summer of 1901 brought both an act of God and a flurry of civic work. In July a thunderstorm rolled through and lightning struck the wire fence on the Propst telephone line, burning out the phones at the residences of both H. T. and H. L. Propst — a misfortune the Condon Globe corrected the following week, explaining that only the lightning arresters had blown, at a cost of a few cents to replace.

In February of that same year, Howard had taken 2,000 sacks of wheat into Arlington to dispose of his stored crop — a substantial quantity, identifying him as one of the prominent farmers of the Condon country. And in January 1901, he had been elected secretary of the citizens' committee organizing what would become the Columbia Inland Railroad — a proposed line from Condon to the Columbia River, capitalized at $500,000, that would have given the Gilliam County wheat country direct access to deep-water shipping. He served on the permanent organization committee alongside the leading figures of the county.

> *The Columbia Inland Railroad never carried a load of wheat. It was incorporated, but like many ambitious regional rail schemes of the period, it foundered on the costs of construction in difficult country. The fact that Howard, in his late twenties, was elected secretary of such an enterprise speaks to the standing he had built in the Condon farming community in a remarkably short time.*

In June 1901 Howard joined his parents in a journey to Farmington, Washington, where they had been called by the death of his uncle James M. Propst — the same brother who had witnessed Henry and Ellen's 1870 marriage in Linn County. By November 1902 the Condon Globe was noting that Howard had returned to Spokane on Sunday, suggesting he was already spending time in the Inland Northwest city that would, two decades later, become a fixed base for the family.

SASKATCHEWAN AND ALBERTA: THE PEACE RIVER FRONTIER (1904–1918)

In 1904, Howard and his father undertook one of the most consequential moves of either man's life: a relocation to Canada to take up homestead land on the Saskatchewan prairie. The 1906 Canadian Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta records the family at Fort Pelly, Saskatchewan, where both Henry T. Propst and Howard L. Propst had filed for adjacent parcels in 1904. Howard, age 33, is listed alongside his wife Jessie May, age 28. His parents and his young sister Daisy, then age 8, occupy the entry just above. A Dominion Lands Homestead Grant patent was issued to Henry for the south-east quarter of section 33, township 35, range 1; a similar patent was issued to Howard for an adjacent quarter. In April 1909, Howard was advertising 400 choice acres for sale at Fort Pelly — 200 in cultivation, 125 plowed and ready, a six-room frame house with furnace heat and telephone connections, frame barn and log stables, granaries and implement sheds — at a price of $9,000.

> *The Fort Pelly district of east-central Saskatchewan was part of the prairie homestead frontier opened in the early years of the twentieth century. The 400-acre property Howard offered for sale in 1909 was a substantial holding for a man who had been on the land only five years, and the asking price of $9,000 reflects significant capital investment in buildings, infrastructure, and improvements. He was demonstrating, even at this early stage, the ability to develop and turn property at a profit — a pattern that would repeat itself throughout his life.*

By 1913 or 1914, Howard had moved north and west to the Peace River country of northern Alberta — the very last frontier of agricultural settlement in the Canadian West. He settled in the Van Rena district (also spelled Vanrena and Vaurena), formerly known as Waterhole, fifty miles west of Peace River Crossing and ten miles north of Dunvegan. There he built what the Edmonton Bulletin would later describe as a large and up-to-date residence, fine stock buildings, and a half-section of broken land. He dammed a creek running through the farm to provide year-round water for cattle and horses and to feed a domestic water system to the house from a well. The Edmonton Bulletin's January 1913 interview — published under the headline "Grain Yield Good in Dunvegan District" — quoted him directly: the wheat that year had been exceptionally good, graded number one hard, and far superior to the Saskatchewan country he had recently come from. He was taking telephone instruments back with him on the return trip. A new roller flour mill was being installed at Dunvegan. The snow was deep and welcome. Howard, the paper noted, was "a loyal booster of his district."

In February 1915, Howard achieved what the Edmonton Bulletin would call the dawn of a new era for the district: he shipped the first carload of wheat ever to leave the Peace River country, hauled 90 miles by sleigh from his Van Rena farm to the end of steel on the Canada Central, thence to McLennan and on to Edmonton. The car was decorated with banners proclaiming the milestone. He had seen, he later told The Province of Vancouver, that grain had reached a price where it was possible to haul, and as soon as the steel was laid he started his teams. Had he been two days later, the snow would have been gone and he would have lost the chance. Crossing the Peace River gorge — 700 feet deep — required doubling on the hill; seven teams were needed to bring the heaviest loads up a hill a mile and a half long. The trip from Vanrena to Peace River Landing took seven days. The wheat cleared about 80 cents a bushel after expenses, and the shipment, examined later in Winnipeg, graded No. 3 Northern with no dockage — acceptable quality for a 1,200-mile haul to market.

> *The first carload of wheat out of the Peace River country was a genuine landmark in the agricultural history of northern Alberta, and Howard Propst's name remains attached to it in the contemporary newspaper record. The feat required not just farming competence but logistical nerve: gambling the timing of the haul against the disappearance of the winter sleigh roads, organizing the teams, and committing the family's grain to a route that nobody had tested at scale. The Vancouver Sun's September 1915 profile, written by Rev. R. G. MacBeth after a tour through the district, called him "the farmer who knows how to farm" — a phrase the paper offered without irony.*

In May 1915, Howard's mother was identified in the Spokesman-Review as "Mrs. H. T. Propst of W617 Providence avenue" — the Spokane address that would serve as the family's American base for the rest of the Alberta period. The article hailed her son's carload-of-wheat distinction. In October 1916, the Edmonton Journal noted that Howard, who with his father did wheat raising on an extensive scale in the Van Rena district, had been in Edmonton for a few days. In December of that same year, Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Propst (Henry) — well-known residents of Van Rena for three years — together with their daughter-in-law Mrs. Howard Propst, had gone to southern Oregon to join Howard, who had preceded them by several weeks. They leased the splendid Van Rena ranch, implements, and stock.

In February 1917, the Edmonton Bulletin reported in some detail on the consummation of one of the largest land deals ever struck in the Peace River district: H. L. Propst's half-section at Van Rena had been sold for $12,500 cash — approximately forty dollars per acre, a figure that auditors of Central Alberta land had laughed at as impossible only months earlier. Howard, who had not been enjoying the best of health, had gone to his native Spokane and

there found a buyer for his farm. The paper noted that the sale would serve to show wealthy farmers to the south the opportunities for investment in the north.

Howard, however, was not quite done with Alberta. In January 1918 he was visiting from Ontario, Oregon. In February 1918, the Edmonton Bulletin's "Returns to Alberta" noted that he had been a resident of Ontario, Oregon, for the past eighteen months but had decided to return to Alberta to take up farming again, and was arranging to purchase a tract of raw land near Calgary, which he would break up for crop the following year. Whether that purchase was completed is not documented in surviving sources; what is clear is that his sister Daisy and brother-in-law Melbourne Burnett were also settled at Peace River around the same time, and he visited his sister at Dunvegan during a February 1918 trip to look after his Van Rena interests.

> *The pattern of Howard's travel between Alberta, Spokane, and the Pacific Northwest during 1916–1918 suggests a man who was reluctantly closing one chapter while not yet sure how to open the next. The 1917 sale of the Van Rena farm placed substantial capital in his hands, but the 1918 attempt to return to Calgary suggests that the Peace River farming country had genuinely suited him, and that the move to Oregon was not without regret. Health appears to have been the consistent thread — the 1917 sale was attributed to his not enjoying the best of health, and his brother-in-law Melbourne Burnett would leave Peace River for Oregon in December 1918 for the same reason.*

SPOKANE AND THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST INTERLUDE (1919–1927)

The years immediately after Howard's Alberta departure are less densely documented than the Peace River chapter, but the record suggests a man in transition. By January 1920 he was at Ontario, Oregon, and left for a week's visit to Portland and Spokane. The November 1920 Sunday Oregonian celebration of his parents' golden wedding anniversary at their home at 46 Shaver Street in Portland identified Howard and his family as being of Vanrena, Alberta, Canada — even though by then he had largely moved on, perhaps reflecting his lingering Alberta property interests. In April 1922, The Columbian (Vancouver, Washington) noted that H. L. Propst and family of Hockinson had sold their place and were moving to Umatilla, Oregon, after a several weeks' stay in Portland.

By late 1925, Howard was being identified in the Klamath Falls Evening Herald as the uncle of Ren Hollister of Ryan's Clothing company — a connection that placed him within an extended western network of family and business relationships. He had arrived in Klamath

Falls from Spokane with the thought of locating there if he could find a favorable business opportunity. By the following week he had moved on, leaving for southern California where he planned to locate. The pattern — Spokane to Klamath Falls to California, all within a few weeks — was not aimless; it was the searching of a man with capital looking for the right place to put it. In March 1927, The Weiser American noted that Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Propst, having been in Washington, were on their way to Council, Idaho, where they would take possession of their ranch property. The Council ranch — a 100-acre property on Mill Creek — would remain in his hands until 1936, when he sold it.

In June 1928, Howard found what he had been searching for. The Goldendale Sentinel reported that Harvey Norris had sold his Variety Store to Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Propst of Ashland, Oregon — the Propsts would move to new and larger quarters in the near future and add largely to the present stock. By September 1928 the Goldendale Sentinel was identifying him as proprietor of the Variety Store and noting that he had bought the Roy Quiney three-acre tract on Columbus Avenue. He had also brought his elderly parents from Ashland to make their future home in Goldendale, where his father would die just over a year later. The variety store business — retail merchandise sold to the rural and small-town public — would prove to be the work of his final adult decades.

THE VARIETY STORE YEARS: GOLDENDALE, HERMISTON, POMEROY, AND OROFINO (1928–1957)

Howard's career as a variety store proprietor began in Goldendale, Washington, in June 1928. The Goldendale Sentinel of those years tracks the rhythm of the business and the family's social life with the warmth that small-town papers reserve for prominent local citizens. He attended his father's funeral in December 1929; Mrs. Glasscock, his sister-in-law from Portland, came to attend the service. In May 1930, the Sentinel published an auction notice for the household goods at his residence on Columbus Avenue — dining table and six leather seat chairs, library table, Congoleum rugs, electric sweeper, Remington typewriter — because the Propsts were leaving Goldendale for Hermiston, Oregon, where they had taken over a large variety store. A signed card of thanks from Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Propst ran the following week, expressing their regret at leaving and their appreciation for the loyal support and friendship of the community.

> *The Hermiston move was driven by business expansion rather than retreat. Howard had owned the Hermiston store since the beginning of the year, and operating it personally became necessary at that point. He incorporated H. L. Propst, Inc., of Hermiston, in June 1930, capitalized at $5,000, with himself, his nephew J. M. Propst, and his mother Ellen R. Propst of Hermiston as the listed incorporators. The Oregon Daily Journal's notice of the incorporation appeared two days before the Sentinel announced his departure.*

Howard ran the Hermiston store for several years. In July 1931 he visited Goldendale on business and reported he had been doing very well with his store at Hermiston, and was much pleased with the location. In June 1932 he and Jessie were Goldendale visitors on Memorial Day. By February 1936 the Pomeroy Courier-Herald was reporting that Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Propst of Pomeroy had left after a weekend visit with Mrs. Propst's sister and her husband, the M. M. Beasleys. The move to Pomeroy, Washington, must have happened in 1935 or early 1936. By July 1936 the Sentinel was reporting that the former owners of the Goldendale Variety Store had sold their variety store at Pomeroy and were looking for a new location — and within weeks they had identified one: Orofino, Idaho.

In 1936, Howard and Jessie established the Propst Variety Store in Orofino, Idaho — the business and the town that would, finally, hold them. Howard's mother, Ellen R. Propst, by then eighty years old and widowed seven years, came to Orofino in 1936 to live with her son. She had previously been a resident of Pomeroy, Washington, and Hermiston, Oregon — the same path her son had traveled — and she would remain at the Orofino home until her death in October 1943.

The Orofino years stretched out long and quiet by the standards of Howard's earlier life. He purchased a twenty-acre farm on Deer Creek in July 1941, and by the end of that month was building a four-room house on it. His Mountain Cove home on Deer Creek would be the setting for his fiftieth wedding anniversary celebration in July 1947, when he and Jessie entertained more than 200 guests at an open-house luncheon, and again for the fifty-fourth anniversary in 1951, when his niece Mrs. T. W. Rattray spent part of a week with her uncle and aunt at Orofino while the Propsts celebrated. In January 1942 he was installed as scene supporter of the Orofino Odd Fellows alongside John Larson — a quiet officer's role consistent with a man then in his seventieth year. His nephew Lester Propst gradually took on the management of the variety store as Howard semi-retired and then, in 1957, sold the business outright.

> *The 1947 Sunday Oregonian celebration of Howard and Jessie's golden wedding anniversary identified him as a former Oregon resident who had been born in Albany, attended Albany College, and farmed near Condon before moving on to Pomeroy and finally Orofino in 1936. The notice ran with a photograph of the couple, captioned simply: "MR. AND MRS. H. L. PROPST. Golden wedding celebrated." More than 200 guests attended the open-house luncheon on the lawn of their Deer Creek home, including friends from Portland and the Willamette Valley. He was 75 years old.*

DEATH: DECEMBER 26, 1962

Howard Lawrence Propst died on Wednesday, December 26, 1962, at the Clearwater Valley Hospital in Orofino, Idaho. He was ninety years old, eleven months, and fifteen days. He had been admitted at four o'clock that morning; by ten he was gone. His Idaho death certificate records the cause of death as cerebral hemorrhage with onset five days earlier, with hypertensive premonitions noted for three days. His occupation is given as Merchant, Variety Store; his birthplace as Albany, Oregon; his father as Henry T. Propst, Illinois-born; his mother as Ellen Nickerson, Oregon-born; his wife and informant as Jessie May Propst of Orofino.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, December 29th, at 10 a.m. at Gilbert's Funeral Home in Orofino. Burial followed at noon at Crestview Mausoleum in Lewis-Clark Memorial Gardens, Lewiston. The Spokane Chronicle's obituary, headlined "H. L. Propst Rite Tomorrow," summarized the essential facts: born in Albany; farming in Condon; the years at Spokane, Fort Pelly, Vale, and finally Orofino since 1936; the Propst Variety Store operated until five years before his death; a 70-year member of the Odd Fellows Lodge; a 65-year member of the Condon Masonic Lodge and the Orofino Rebekahs.

> *The 70-year Odd Fellows membership recorded in Howard's obituary places his initial joining at approximately 1892, when he was twenty years old and still in Linn County. His election as Noble Grand of Summit Lodge No. 140, I.O.O.F., in Gilliam County in August 1899 — documented in the contemporary Condon Globe — confirms his active engagement with the order from his early adulthood. Seventy years is a remarkable continuity of affiliation, surviving every move from Oregon to Saskatchewan to Alberta to Washington to Idaho.*

SUMMARY

Howard Lawrence Propst lived ninety years, almost exactly. He was born in Albany, Oregon, in January 1872 to a pioneer family on both sides; he died in Orofino, Idaho, the day after Christmas in 1962, with his wife of sixty-five years beside him. The arc between those two

dates traced one of the more remarkable migration paths of his generation: from the Willamette Valley to the wheat country of Gilliam County in the 1890s; to the Saskatchewan prairie at Fort Pelly in 1904; to the Peace River frontier in northern Alberta around 1913; back to Oregon by way of Spokane in the late 1910s; a long interlude of searching between Oregon, Washington, Idaho in the 1920s; and finally a settled three-decade career as a small-town variety store proprietor in Goldendale, Hermiston, Pomeroy, and Orofino.

The single most-documented moment of his life was the February 1915 sleigh haul of the first carload of wheat ever shipped out of the Peace River district — ninety miles by team across winter country, racing the snow to the end of steel, then on by rail to Edmonton and ultimately Winnipeg. The Edmonton Bulletin gave it a banner headline. The Vancouver Sun ran a profile. Howard, then forty-three years old, was identified as "the farmer who knows how to farm." Two years later he sold the same farm for $12,500 cash, a figure local auditors had called impossible.

What the record captures secondarily but no less clearly is the texture of a long marriage and a wide family. The 1897 Condon Globe notice about the initials confusion. The shared move to Saskatchewan with his parents in 1904. The visits to his sister Daisy at Dunvegan in 1918. His mother coming to live with him at Orofino in 1936 and remaining until her death in 1943. The Propst Variety Store passing to his nephew Lester after his retirement. The 1947 golden wedding anniversary with two hundred guests on the lawn of his Mountain Cove home. The 1951 fifty-fourth anniversary with his niece visiting from Davenport, Washington. The 70-year Odd Fellows membership, the 65-year Condon Masonic Lodge membership, the Rebekahs at Orofino — affiliations throughout his life.

SOURCES

Vital and Legal Records

Certificate of Death — Howard L. Propst, State of Idaho, Clearwater County; State File No. 5136; principal cause: cerebral hemorrhage; informant: Jessie May Propst; signed Dr. B. Zachgreb, Orofino; filed December 27, 1962.

1906 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta — Howard L. Propst (entry 151) and Henry T. Propst (entry 148), Fort Pelly, Saskatchewan; immigration year 1904.

U.S. Naturalization Records Index — Propst, Howard Lawrence, sequence 15/406.

Newspaper Sources

Condon Globe (Condon, Oregon) • 26 Nov 1897 (Timber Culture witness, Charles Dahlke claim) • 10 Dec 1897 (birth notice, sister Daisy) • 14 Jul 1898 (Woodmen Camp installation) • 23 Mar 1899 (Homestead Entry No. 5326) • 6 Apr 1899 (Circuit Court jury list) • 3 Aug 1899 (Officers Installed, Summit Lodge No. 140, I.O.O.F.) • 10 Jan 1901 (railroad meeting) • 17 Jan 1901 (Will Incorporate, Columbia Inland Railroad) • 21 Feb 1901 (wheat sale, 2000 sacks, Arlington) • 27 Jun 1901 (return from Farmington, WA) • 18 Jul 1901 (lightning strike, telephone line) • 25 Jul 1901 (correction) • 5 Sep 1901 (Circuit Court Jurors) • 13 Nov 1902 (return to Spokane)

The Oregonian / The Sunday Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) • 9 Jan 1901 (Organize for a Railroad, Gilliam County) • 7 Nov 1920 (H. T. Propst golden wedding anniversary) • 25 Dec 1929 (obituary, Henry Taylor Propst) • 20 Jul 1947 ("Pair Observe Golden Date")

Manitoba Morning Free Press (Winnipeg) • 3 Apr 1909 (For Sale notice, 400 acres at Fort Pelly)

The Evening Statesman (Walla Walla) • 8 Sep 1909 (Leaves for Oregon)

Edmonton Journal (Edmonton, Alberta) • 13 Nov 1911 (Food Greatest Essential for New Northland, F. E. Rooney interview) • 21 Oct 1916 (Howard Propst and J. L. Propst, Van Rena) • 9 Dec 1916 (Splendid Ranch, departure from Van Rena)

The Edmonton Bulletin (Edmonton, Alberta) • 18 Jan 1913 (Grain Yield Good in Dunvegan District) • 20 Jan 1914 (L. E. Fontaine, J. L. Propst wheat yields) • 23 Mar 1915 (First Carload of Wheat from Peace River District) • 16 Aug 1916 (North Crops Suffer Much from Frost, H. L. Propst, Waterhole) • 23 Feb 1917 (Peace River Farm is Sold at Splendid Figure, $12,500) • 9 Feb 1918 (Returns to Alberta) • 11 Feb 1918 (Visitor from Oregon)

Claresholm Review (Claresholm, Alberta) • 20 May 1915 (Peace River Wheat in 'Peg)

The Vancouver Sun (Vancouver, BC) • 3 Jul 1915 (Tells of Development in the Peace River)

The Spokesman-Review (Spokane, Washington) • 18 May 1915 (Spokane Boy Wins Distinction in Peace River Country)

The Province (Vancouver, BC) • 3 Sep 1915 ("Predicts a City at Peace River Crossing," Rev. R. G. MacBeth)

Spokane Chronicle (Spokane, Washington) • 6 Dec 1915 (Real Estate — To Exchange, Farmington) • 19 Aug 1939 • 2 May 1940 • 8 May 1940 • 20 Aug 1940 • 4 Jul 1941 • 28 Jul 1941 • 19 Jan 1942 (Orofino Odd Fellows installation) • 18 Jun 1945 • 12 Jul 1947 (Orofino Couple Married 50 Years) • 28 Dec 1962 (H. L. Propst Rite Tomorrow)

The Ontario Argus (Ontario, Oregon) • 29 Jan 1920

The Columbian (Vancouver, Washington) • 21 Apr 1922 (move from Hockinson to Umatilla) • 28 Mar 1932 (deed, 40 acres from O. W. Caldwell)

The Evening Herald (Klamath Falls, Oregon) • 19 Nov 1925 • 24 Nov 1925 (Goes to California)

The Weiser American / Weiser Signal-American (Weiser, Idaho) • 31 Mar 1927 (Council ranch property) • 11 Jun 1936 (sale of Mill Creek ranch to Fred R. Babbit)

Goldendale Sentinel (Goldendale, Washington) • 7 Jun 1928 (purchase of Harvey Norris's Variety Store) • 21 Jun 1928 (move to Camplan building) • 13 Sep 1928 (Roy Quiney tract, Columbus Avenue; parents move from Ashland) • 14 Nov 1929 • 21 Nov 1929 (H. T. Propst illness) • 26 Dec 1929 (Mrs. Glasscock at H. T. Propst funeral; obituary) • 28 Mar 1929 • 6 Jun 1929 • 18 Jul 1929 (Council, Idaho farm) • 8 Aug 1929 (death of sister-in-law) • 13 Feb 1930 • 1 May 1930 • 22 May 1930 (Auction Sale notice) • 5 Jun 1930 (move to Hermiston) • 12 Jun 1930 (Card of Thanks) • 30 Jul 1931 • 2 Jun 1932 • 9 Jul 1936 (former owners of Goldendale Variety Store, sold Pomeroy store)

The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, Oregon) • 15 Jun 1930 (New Incorporations, H. L. Propst, Inc., Hermiston) • 26 Dec 1929 (Henry Taylor Propst funeral)

Courier-Herald (Pomeroy, Washington) • 27 Feb 1936 (visit to M. M. Beasleys) • 30 Jul 1936 (injured knee notice)

Davenport Times-Tribune (Davenport, Washington) • 19 Jul 1951 (Mrs. T. W. Rattray visit, 54th anniversary)

The Capital Journal (Salem, Oregon) • 23 Jun 1941 (Pioneer Powell Clan Has Stayton Reunion)

Family and Genealogical Sources

FamilySearch family record — Howard Lawrence Propst (2W64-VL2), b. 1872, d. 1962; spouse Jessie May Davidson (MM79-D84), b. 1877, d. 1965; m. 10 Jul 1897, Gilliam, Oregon, United States.

Family photograph — "Propst family circa 1900," Howard Lawrence Propst and family, contributed to FamilySearch by Alison_Krutsch, 12 November 2014

MASTER INDEX OF NAMES

Every principal subject, family member, and secondary figure named in this book, with the page on which their biography begins or where they are discussed. Bold entries mark the eighteen principal subjects.

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